THE WORLD CONFLICT

BY

F.C.JENNINGS

C. G. Petry.
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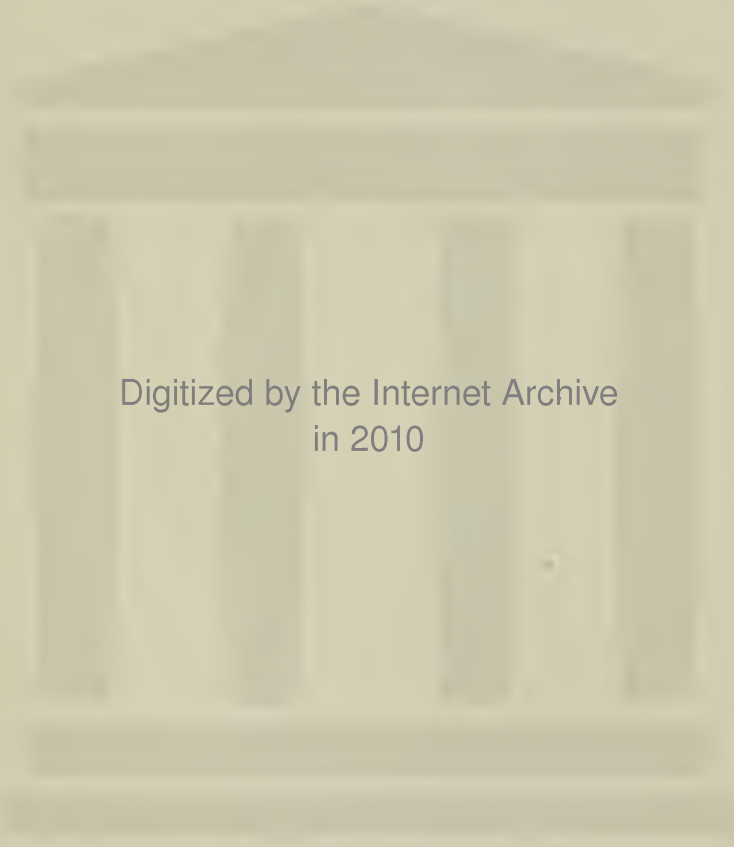
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The World Conflict

in the Light of

The Prophetic Word

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By F. C. Jennings

FOREWORD TO THIRD EDITION

It is now over two years since the issue of the second edition of this paper,* and the war still goes actively on; and while the end must necessarily be approaching, what has been called "the fearful equipoise" is still sufficiently maintaied as to make it by no means to see when or in what exact form that end will come.

It is of course not impossible that the much longed-for peace may have been realized before this gets into the reader's hands, but even if this should be the case, it will certainly not affect the value of the Word of God, nor will it be found to clash absolutely with anything written herein. No attempt has been made to fix dates for any event, clearly predicted as it may be—such an attempt would at once condemn itself to all sober minds—

*Under the title of "The War in the Light of the Word"; but so much new matter has been added, new light has been received through the goodness of God (as believed by the writer) on several interesting and vital prophetic questions, that it has been felt simply to call it a third edition of the same pamphlet would be really misleading; and the Publisher has suggested that the title be also enlarged, as it were, from "The War" to "The World Conflict."

but to show how very near to those clearly predicted events present conditions bring us, and thus revive that hope that is characteristically Christian.

My chief motive in issuing another edition is to take advantage of the kindly criticisms that have been accorded its forerunners; to seek, by a not extravagant enlargement, to make the truth more intelligible to those who may not be quite as familiar with prophetic study as the earlier editions assume, and at the same time to eliminate what may be misunderstood or raise unnecessary questions.

I again, still painfully conscious of its many crudities and shortcomings, commend it to the goodness of God, and to the consideration of His beloved people.

Plainfield, N. J., August, 1917.

FOREWORD TO SECOND EDITION OF THE WAR IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD.

The paper seeks answers to the following questions:

1. Do the Scriptures take any account of the events that have occurred, and are occurring in that part of the earth, or amid those nations that have assumed the name of Christian? Or, to put it in others words, is God so interested in all that is in any way connected with His beloved Son, that He has foreseen and foretold the course and destiny of the sphere that should assume His name; yet in

such a shadowy way as to prevent the forecast affecting an ever-present hope of His return?

2. If so, can we discern with any precision where we have arrived in that series of events that have been thus foretold?

3. Is the present war, affecting directly or indirectly all those nations, entirely unnoticed in Scripture?

4. Have we any scriptural justification for believing that the pouring out of the last vial will synchronize with the Lord's coming to the air, to take His redeemed people to be with Himself in fulfilment of 1 Thess. IV., 13-18?

These questions, considered only as questions, are so inexpressibly important as really to demand consideration at least; and if that be soberly conducted in the spirit of dependence on the Lord, and a cleaving close to Scripture, we need not fear where it may lead us.

One very common form of objection may be thus expressed: "You deduce that the Lord's coming is very near, but have not others done exactly the same again and again? Did not time prove that they were mistaken; and may it not equally prove you to be so?"

One must certainly admit the truth of the first question: the Lord's word is ever "I come quickly." The inspired apostle, Paul, never permitted himself a word that would **necessitate** those whom he addressed dying before that coming; on the contrary, he fostered and confirmed the hope that "we" may

be "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord:" but infidelity alone would say that he was mistaken. The Church, in her members, ever maintains her expectant attitude for the Lord's return through all time, till her hope be fulfilled. Nor is this ever a mistake; it **shall** be fulfilled: the mistake lies with those who deny the hope.

"But" it may be urged, "does not the admission that others have seen similar evidences, which, as the event proved, did not justify their expectation of the Lord's very near return, weaken greatly **your** argument that present evidences, particularly this war, do justify that expectation? For instance, Mr. Elliott wrote about 70 years ago:

"With regard to our present position, we have been led, as the result of our investigations, to fix it at but a **short time from the end of the now existing dispensation, and the expected second advent of Christ.** * * * And **our wisdom** is to consider whether the signs of the times now present be so peculiar as to warrant a measure of confidence—such as was never warranted before.*

"So a generation, or about 30 years later, Dr. Grattan Guinness wrote,'If we are right—if there be unequivocal proof in the inspired volume: **proof that no previous generation of Christians was in a position to appreciate as we are,*** that the day of Christ is at hand. * * * if we be right in believing that scarcely a single prophecy in the whole Bible,

*Bold face mine.

relating to events prior to the second advent of Christ, remains unfulfilled—if we be right, then surely every pulpit in England should be ringing with timely testimony to that truth.'

"Could anything be stronger than these; yet that generation, too, has gone, why should not this be again and again repeated?"

Such an objector must remember that it is by no means asserted that the Lord Jesus will **surely** return during the life of the present generation; nor at any definite time. He may come at any time, but if He should not come for many years, nothing that is written in these pages would by that delay be proved untrue.

But what **is** asserted is that while neither Elliott nor Guinness could see that the **very end** of the series of events of which N. T. prophecy speaks, had been reached in their day (indeed, both, while speaking of the end being "near," disavow this) yet we do see good and scriptural grounds for believing that, in the present war, **that very end has been reached, and now absolutely nothing remains unfulfilled in this shadowy historical fulfillment of Revelation VI-XVI; and thus the "hope" may be held with renewed confidence.**

The very gravity and apparent boldness of such a statement is quite enough to forbid its being made lightly or without shrinking; but surely if the Lord Jesus Christ **is** coming again (and I am not writing now for any who question this) then there **shall** be an hour when those who say that that coming

must be very, very near, shall be justified by the actual event—why should that hour not be the present? This paper gives the reasons for the conviction that, as far as the book of New Testament prophecy gives us its divine light, there is ground for confidence that it is, and it is again commended to the prayerful consideration of the Lord's people.

Plainfield, May, 1915.

FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION OF THE WAR IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD

In view of the bewildering multitude of prophetic interpretations that are being evoked by the present war, I feel keenly that another is not to be added without a serious challenge to oneself as to its justification. If it has not been accompanied by the recognition of one's deep need of divine enlightment, and this enlightment sought in the quiet of the closet: if what is thus put forth is not believed, at least, to be a most gracious answer to these prayers—feeble as they are felt to have been; if it be not of profound importance and of practical bearing, and thus needed by the Lord's people; if it contains only what has already been given out by others—then the accompanying paper would have no justification at all.

Nor do I say this to influence the reader's judgment as to what is written, but simply to plead for its **testing** by the Word of God, and for its rejection if it fails under that test. If the conclusions ar-

rived at, new as they may be, and are to myself, are not justified by every other Scripture; if they are refused by **one;** if they alter the character of the Christian's hope, or interpose any delay to the return of the Lord, then let them be rejected. If the opposite of these hypotheses be really the case, then I venture to think that these conclusions are of sufficient interest and importance to justify their issue.

For forty years, or since taking any intelligent interest in prophetic study, I have strongly held to what is technically termed the **Futurist** interpretation of the book of Revelation, in the sense that the final fulfillment of all subsequent to the third chapter lies **after** the rapture of the Church with all the redeemed who have fallen asleep. Nor has my conviction as to this wavered or weakened in the slightest.

Similarly, while recognizing a distinct measure of truth in it, I have looked with comparative indifference on the **historical** interpretation, which sees the fulfillment of this same portion in the events that have occurred, or are occurring, in Christendom. Indeed this has often been so repellent by its fanciful or strained character, as to appear to be trifling with God's word rather than adequately interpreting it.

It has been due therefore to no predilection that, for the past few years, I have been impressed with the importance of a cautious consideration of this **historical** interpretation, and this has been incal-

culably strengthened by the events of the past two years.

It has been said by one whose name justly carries much weight that in the widespread sorrow and distress caused by the present conflict in Europe, we ought not to "turn aside to puzzle out a connection between the events of the campaign and the prophetic Scriptures." "Our thoughts should be turning, not to the mysteries of the apocalyptic visions, but to the mystery of the Gospel."

If the one annuls the other; if the endeavor to "take heed to the word of prophecy" checks love or paralyzes care for the souls of our fellow men; if the voice of prophecy may only be listened to in times of peace and prosperity; if there be no comfort, or cheer, or hope for the mourner in it; then truly who would not agree with Sir Robert Anderson, and indeed possibly go still further, and say: If these be its **necessary** accompaniments, then away with all prophetic study, not only for the present, but forever?

But the writer goes on: "As He stood by the grave of Lazarus, the Lord did not make prophecy His theme, and we should certainly be utterly out of sympathy with His heart if we turned to such inquiries at the present moment."

Indeed, this too **may** be quite true, but if, and only if it be a cold, heartless indifference to human sorrow and suffering that leads to making prophecy our theme. But in doing so shall we necessarily be so far out of sympathy with **His** heart, who, as He

stood with the weeping woman so recently bereaved, comforted her with "Thy brother shall rise again," and then further proclaimed, as against her hopeless conventional creed, the imminence of that rising? This is, I know, divine promise; but surely it was in the form of **foretelling** what was to come, and thus substituting a hopeful forward look for a backward one of hopeless sorrow.

So in that hour when sorrow had filled the hearts of His disciples, He tells them of the Comforter who should come, one part of whose mission of comfort would be to **show them things to come.** John XVI.

So too when there was mourning in Thessalonica how does the Holy Spirit comfort, and indeed plainly **direct the mourners to** "comfort one another," save by the sure words of prophecy? 1 Thess. IV. 13-18.

So, as a matter of simple fact, in all times of peculiar sorrow and suffering in the history of the sorrowing and suffering Church, there has always been an instinctive turning, not from, but **to** the precious and sure word of prophecy. Always at such times of thickened darkness, the question has been sighed, **"O watchman, what of the night?"** Always the cheering answer given **"the morning cometh,"** but not unaccompanied by the warning "also the night."

Thus, in the very reverse of a spirit of indifference to the widespread sorrow—in the very reverse of a spirit of rivalry with the gospel of the grace of God—aye, in the assurance that the holy light of the

word of God thrown on present conditions, will result both in comforting the bereaved, filling them and all of us with a renewed and cheerful hope; and in giving a renewed incentive to telling out the gospel in this day of salvation so fast drawing to its close, do I take up this theme; for if I have not greatly erred, we shall find in it the strongest evidences, hitherto unseen, of the imminence of His coming, when the sound of mourning shall, for the Christian, forever cease; but when the present gospel of the grace of God shall also cease to sound forever.

Plainfield, N. J., February, 1915.

Introductory.

The Use and Misuse of Prophecy

There are certain catchwords that sound so self-evident that they are adopted and passed on without a great deal of consideration; till they become proverbial, and must not be questioned, or even examined. But, true as they may be, they may yet be pressed beyond their truth and need a balancing truth to keep them within due limits, and indeed from a false use.

For instance: "Prophecy was not given that we might become prophets"; is so clearly true, that we at once respond: "most surely not; the statement carries its own proof in the very saying; and the many evidences of the failure of would-be prophets confirm the truth only too clearly, and the need of pressing it." But, with this as a foundation, people build far beyond it, and deny that we are to let prophecy have its natural purpose—we must not foresee anything whatever in the light of prophecy. Thus the prayerful, dependent study of the prophetic Scriptures is not only neglected in these days, but actually avoided as a kind of danger, and that not only by the careless, but by many of the most sober of the Lord's people. Thus the light of the word of prophecy, as to which the apostle Peter wrote, that we do well

to take heed, is looked upon as filling the function of a **lighthouse** to warn people from approaching too closely, rather than of a holy and most graciously given lamp for the feet, shining in a dark place by which to govern our hopes, affections and conduct now.

Thus too we have in our extreme caution forced beyond their intent the Lord's words: "I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye might believe" as if it were He who had thus forbidden any deductions from the present as to the fulfillment of the inspired word of prophecy in the future. We have assumed that the Lord, in so speaking, laid down a broad, general principle that must govern us under all circumstances and at all times: that we must wait for all prophecy to be finally fulfilled, and are not justified in foreseeing even the near approach of that fulfillment at all. But a little consideration will again show that this is quite an unjustified strain, for it wrenches the words violently from their context and really nullifies, as said, the intent and value of all prophecy.

Consider the circumstances under which the Lord spoke. He was on the point of departure to His Father, and was comforting His disciples in view of that departure by telling them of it beforehand. They had then no Scripture to throw its clear light upon a period in which He should be absent, and in which the affairs of earth would go on without interruption, as if nothing had happened. They greatly needed faith in Him, no longer with them, to be

sustained at such a time. He says, "I go unto the Father, and then will come the trial of your faith, you will no longer walk by sight as you have done for the past three years, but purely by faith, as indeed you have had to do with God, for He is invisible. Well, **ye believe in God, believe also in me,** for I too shall not be visible. So I have foretold you of it that your faith may be confirmed by what otherwise would have shaken it." That is, He spoke prophetic words to meet their need in a future time of trial.

But then does exactly the same thing hold good when He is coming back, as when He was going away? Has He given us prophetic Scriptures that tell of His return, that when He **does** return we "may believe?" What need will there be for strengthening our faith, when we shall cease to walk by faith altogether and when even "prophecies shall fail" (1 Cor. XIII.8)? Nay, what we do need is a **present** help to our faith, in view of the **present** sorrows, sufferings and failures of the present time. Something that shall revive our present drooping faith, and brighten our present dull hope by such light as His word gives on the conditions of the day; so filled with portent and promise as they are. So, and only so, shall His written word have exactly the same effect as that He desired when He spoke orally to His disciples in John XIV-29, **"that we may believe."**

Far then from forbidding the making of any deductions from the light of Scriptures on present

events or "signs," as they really are, the Lord himself seems to have attached blame for **not** deducing. He said: "you are quite able to deduce that when the south wind blows it will result in warmth in the near future, or when the moisture-laden west wind blows it will result in rain in the near future. When the sun sinks with a rose-glow you deduce a fair to-morrow; or when it rises with a threatening red, you deduce that a storm is imminent." All are future events deduced from present conditions, and then, I repeat, far from blaming them for **this,** He adds, as if astonished, "how is it that you cannot equally discern the significance of the times, and deduce what must necessarily follow present conditions." He really reproaches them for **not** using a similar prevision in the spiritual sphere; will He then reproach us **for** doing so? We will not indeed "prophesy," or presume to go beyond Scripture, or foretell what Scripture has not foretold, but see what great cheer and hope is afforded by conditions, otherwise so depressing, as are the present.

Nor do we lack certain limitations to preserve us from any serious mistake or real danger. If the deductions that we make affect adversely the foundation truths, or principles, of prophetic interpretation, they must be rejected. For instance, we are quite justified in foreseeing that the Lord Jesus will return, and that that return is drawing nigh—"the day approaching"—but we are not justified in fore-

seeing the year, or the month, or the day, or time of the year (as if it could only be at the feast of trumpets, for instance) of that return, for that would militate against the foundation truth of **constant** watchfulness and expectancy—nothing written herein will be found to do this. If our deductions are in the line of clearly revealed Scripture they cannot be greatly at fault. My purpose at least is to seek by the goodness of God the much needed light from the Scriptures on the present "roaring of the sea and the rolling surge" (Luke XXI. 25), when, to judge from the tossing of the waves, the winds that govern them must be greatly moved. Or, to apply the figure, judging from the tumult amid the nations, the spirit-powers that ever affect them—"the powers of heaven"—are being "shaken," and see if the Scriptures do not throw light over these stormy waters leading up to the Lord Himself, and His coming to still the storm: a coming of which He has given us a foreshadowing when, in the days of His flesh, He came in the very last—the fourth watch of the night—the morning watch—to His disciples "toiling in rowing" for the wind was contrary."

The Lord said, "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke XXI-20). Surely when that condition obtained the deduction was inevitable. Now suppose the Lord had said, "When ye see all Christendom ablaze with war, then know that my return is nigh," the effect would have been

the same; to-day we should all be looking hopefully for His return. Well, He did not indeed say these very words, for they would have interfered with that attitude of constant watchful expectancy that He ever pressed upon us, when such a war did **not** prevail; but He has so said it, that now that Christendom **is** in a blaze of war we can justly deduce the imminence of His coming. It is the purpose of this booklet to examine the Scriptures and see if they do really justify such a statement.

CHAPTER II.

The inestimable value of the Scriptures in the present crisis: their clear evidence that we are in the closing hour of this dispensation.

If any one of the participants in the conflict, or strong partizans thereof, were asked what in his judgment would be the outcome, each, whatever his inward fears or hopes, would answer according to his sympathies, and find little difficulty in showing that everything still pointed even at this late hour to the complete victory of those he favored. This is still constantly evidenced in the public speeches of the representative men of the nations involved.

The Christian, however he may be lacking in the wisdom of this world, or be less informed as to its politics, has one inestimable advantage of which that world knows little, and he asks himself: Do these holy oracles of God, perfect revelation of His ways as they are, throw no light at all on the present scene in which His beloved people still are? Do they give no answer to the questions that none can help asking in these days? Must the Christian be as dependent on the newspapers, the contradic-

tory testimony of men, or his own unaided reasoning powers, as the rejector of the truth of God? Has he no help—no light therein? Is not God the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Trinity, here for the very purpose not only of taking of the things of Christ and showing them to him; but of leading him into **all** truth, and **shewing him things to come?** Such questions answer themselves; and thus we may turn confidently to the Scriptures, in the humble confidence that the Spirit of God will guide us as we seek light on the subject of this paper.

Those Scriptures clearly justify our seeing the day approach, for it is written **"exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."**[1] This then is not only permissible but incumbent on us, and the very word "day" clearly evidences that nature has its voice and speaks to us in innumerable "parables," which we **may** possible err in interpreting; but, neglecting which, we should also most surely err.

To see the day approach then we must look at conditions that introduce the natural day. Last evening the sun departed, and for a while his beams lingered, making a twilight; this deepened, shade on shade, till darkness ruled, only relieved by the dependent luminaries of heaven, the moon and stars, which were now and again obscured by earth-born shadows and clouds. So the hours passed till the

[1] Heb. 10:25.

familiar call of the cock spoke of another day coming, and this was followed by a recovery, a return of the light that was lost last evening, in streaks of gray in the East. Then those awake became aware of a lovely star, the morning-star, that heralded the returning sun, which finally appeared, flooding the earth with its beams.

How easily read is this parable in the light of the Word of God that gives us the number and the significant names of the watches into which this world's night is divided.[1] We are surely past the first, or **evening watch,** in which our Sun having gone—the Light of the world no longer in the world[2]—the shades began to fall, divine truth began to be lost, "all in Asia turned away" from Paul,[3] (that is, from his characteristic doctrines) and still greater darkess was foretold as coming on.[4] So the midnight watch came, and in the pitch darkness of Rome's dominance, the "moon" waned, the Church's light was lost; the night was only relieved by a remnant of faithful ones, who indeed shone "as luminaries in the world."[5] The times familiarly known as the "Dark Ages" could hardly be better pictured than by "the midnight watch." It is passed, God be thanked; and in a Wyckliffe, a Luther, a Calvin, a Zwingle, and a host of others, we hear the awakening cries of the "Cock-crowing

[1] Mark 13:35.
[2] John 9:5.
[3] 2 Tim. 1:15.
[4] Acts 20:29:30; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1.
[5] Phil 2:15.

watch" of the 14th to 16th centuries. But this too is surely behind us, and we can see plainly (or it is our condemnation if we cannot) in the recovery during the last hundred years, of many a long-lost Pauline truth, the streaks of returning light; the first heralds of, as they emanate from, the still hidden Sun. As Paul was peculiarly the apostle of the Church with its heavenly calling, so it was **this** character of truth that was lost in the evening watch[1] and it is **this** character of truth that has been, by God's goodness, recovered in the morning watch. We say then with absolute confidence that we are in the fourth, "the **last** watch of the night." We **know** in which watch our Lord will come for there is no other in which He **could** come. Woe to us if we are not watchful and sober!

Equally clear, equally simple, equally sure is the divinely given forecast of the professing Church's path through the seven consecutive conditions foretold in Rev. II. and III. These two chapters suffice to give a bird's-eye view of that long, weary path of nineteen centuries; nor can I stop to prove the prophetic character of those letters, nor is it necessary; for those who may not be familiar with it, there is now abundant literature on the subject. Suffice it to say here that the epistle to the church in Ephesus spoke of that time of early declension when the Church gradually left her first-love, and this letter may be said to have covered (speaking roughly), the first two centuries of this era. Smyrna

[1] 2 Tim. 1:15.

followed—the era of persecution, when the Pagan Roman emperors endeavored to quench the divine light of the Gospel in the blood of its confessors and covered down to the middle of the fourth century. Pergamos tells us of the settling down of the Church in this world "where Satan's throne is", (for he is still its prince) and was significantly introduced by the carnal victory won by Constantine, a professing Christian, and by carnal weapons. This drifted to the dominance of Jezebel or Rome in Thyatira; and the dark ages followed down to the sixteenth century. Then came the new beginning in Sardis, the Reformation and the institution of national Protestant churches, with a name to live, but, alas, as to the mass, "a few names" excepted, dead; followed, in Philadelphia, by the recovery of the true children of God from among the mass of false profession, by the means of revivals, headed up in that divine movement which, in its incipiency, was peculiarly "Philadelphian," (brotherly-love) since those gathered from the divisions of Christendom would permit no name to distinguish them from their brethren anywhere, and as expressing this breadth of Christian affection, only permitted the name that was inclusive of all saints "brethren" —the word "Plymouth" was added by opponents, but never adopted. Alas, this, too, quickly failed, and passed away as the last testimony of God. The bitter controversies that had characterized the avowed denominations; and division after division each resulting in the formation of an entity,

as distinct from the others as any "denomination," told out the shame and sorrow of the passing of Philadelphia, as the last testimony with the crown she is warned to hold fast, to Laodicea, not only uncrowned, but "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked."

In Laodicea, which means "the people judging," the spirit of democracy has invaded the church and in the all too clear evidence of this in the heaping "to themselves teachers having itching ears," in the self-complacency of the professing Christianity of the day, in its proud pretension of much knowledge, with its real ignorance of its truly miserable condition, in its lukewarmness and indifference to the Lord Jesus, in its sad and utter failure as a testimony to the grace of God to a lost race; we discover clearly that we are not only in the last **fourth,** but in the last **seventh** division of the Church's path; and again we hear the one word it speaks: **"The Lord is at hand."**

These evidences answer to what the Lord called **"the face of the sky,"** but there is also **"the face of the earth"** to be discerned; and here the evidences of the approaching day are so numerous, so varied, yet all pointing with perfect unanimity in the same way to the near approach of the Sun-rise of that Day, that we have to remind ourselves that, near as this appears to be, there is still another herald to come before it: the **Morning Star!**

For it is as the **Sun,** that our Lord comes to give a final peace to this war-distracted earth. He is now sitting at the right hand of God, awaiting till His foes be made His footstool. He asks and receives the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession;[1] then rises from His seat, approaches the earth, all lying in darkness and the wicked one as it is[2] and in which all (but a comparative few) are sound asleep, for they are in, and of, the night. As He reaches our atmosphere, He is seen as the "Bright Morning Star" by these comparatively few, and shouts His quickening word: thousands of thousands respond from the tomb, and stand again upon the earth in bodies as filled with glory as His own; then we who are still alive are also changed instantly into the same glory; and altogether, in one unspeakably joyous company, respond to the infinitely superior attraction of His Person, which far countervails the power of gravity that now binds us to the earth, and we rise to meet Him in the air.[3] Then follows war in heaven, for heaven cannot contain both redeemed sinners and their accuser; Satan is defeated and cast out to the earth, to the woe of those still dwelling upon it.[4] Then is set up the judgment seat of Christ in the heavenlies, where we all must be manifested,[5] while on earth the believing rem-

[1] Psalm 2:8.
[2] Ephesians 6:12; 1 John 5:19.
[3] 1 Thess. 4:13-18. 1 Cor. 15:51; Phil. 3:21.
[4] Rev. 12:3.
[5] 2 Cor. 5:10.

nant of Israel, which shall, at that time, evidence the return of the grace of God to the Jew, His work with His heavenly people being ended, are also manifested,[1] but there it is in the glare of unparalled persecution till they are at their last gasp.[2]. Then Jesus, Lord and Messiah, continues His journey, we accompanying, until, reaching the earth, He consumes the wicked one with the spirit of His mouth and destroys him with the brightness of His coming,[3] delivers the hard-pressed remnant of Israel;[4] the devil is cast into the bottomless pit,[5] then follows the judgment seat of Christ **on the earth;** the sessional judgment of the nations,[6] and finally, the earth, basking in perfect peace in the rays of her Sun, and under His perfect government,[7] forgets the 6,000 years of misery she has suffered under the devil's usurped reign.

All this is well and surely founded on the Word of God, nor have we gone beyond it. Where then, do we stand to-day in this path, or way, of our Lord so clearly traced? We are surely in the last watch of the night: the streaks of the returning light we do already see; but the Sun is the full manifestation of the Lord Jesus and comes **last;** but between these

[1] Isaiah 5:8.
[2] Dan. 12:7.
[3] 2 Thess. 2:8.
[4] Zech. 14.
[5] Rev. 20.
[6] Mat. 25:32.
[7] Ps. 72; 51 Thess. 1-4.

is "the **Morning Star,**" and it is to see Him thus that we now watch moment by moment.

But true as this is, it is only one step to the answer of our question. The Lord's coming to the air, and our being caught up to meet Him there, **may** occur at any time, and what we have already seen assures us that it is very near; but that is nothing new for never has any known event been allowed to interpose, and thus alter the true hope of the Church, and of each of her component members, who have ever been converted "to wait for the Son from heaven"[1] and thus it would be a mere platitude to say that it **may** occur during the present war—of course it may—but are there strong suggestions that of all the possible contingencies that may end the war, this is, for all who reverence the word of God, the most **probable?** For an answer to this we must go further, and look at the present conditions of the earth, which apparently only await exactly such an event to come into the precise order and arrangement of unfulfilled Old Testament prophecy.

For until that long looked for event, the completion of God's **heavenly** work, as we may call it, is accomplished; Old Testament prophecy, dealing with the restoration of Israel, and the divine judgment of the **earth** having Israel for its center, is not being fulfilled at all. The renewal of God's dealings with the earthly people necessitates the completion of what may be called his **heavenly** work—with those who partake of the **heavenly** calling; for they

[1] 1 Thess. 1:4.

are altogether distinct, and carried on on opposite principles. This is of the most vital importance. Indeed, I am not aware of any Scripture that speaks even of the actual transference of the Jew back to his land **in unbelief.*** He is there already when prophecy takes him up: has indeed been there for a sufficient time, at least, to form a government, and rebuild his temple; as speaks Dan. IX. 27; and this could hardly be done in a very short time.

Let us then first note some, at least, of the conditions that the inspired word assures us will exist at the moment when Old Testamet prophecy begins again to be fulfilled; then compare these conditions with those now ruling Christendom; note how near they approach and what may serve to

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*This return in unbelief must be carefully distinguished from another and later return, no longer in disobedience, in which Jehovah takes so keen an interest that He notes the actual means of transport: **"Who are these who fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? Surely the isles shall wait for me and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far."** Is. 55:8-9. **"And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in covered carriages, and upon mules and in swift carriages, to my holy mountain Jerusalem."** Is. 66, 20. But this is what takes place **after** the Messiah has come; the return in unbelief is **before;** nor, I think is this to be found noted in Scripture at all. Therefore since it is not a part of O. T. prophecy, nor the direct work of God, it **might** occur even while the Church was the vessel of testimony on the earth; that is, even we may see, while still here, the Jew returning, building his temple, and establishing a government in Palestine. I say we **may** see this; but it is not at all incumbent or necessary that we should do so.

span that short interval, or unite the present with the future and those divinely foretold conditions.

1. At that moment the Roman Empire, so long non-existent, must again be in evidence, since its "prince" is seen making a treaty.[1]

2. The Roman empire will be composed of "ten" autonomous kingdoms, all owning one federal head or "prince."[2]

3. It will also be composed of two opposing political principles; called, in the symbolic language of prophecy, "iron" and "clay."[3]

4. The Jew must also be back in his land, with an organized government; for he forms the other party to this treaty.[4]

5. The Jewish temple will have been rebuilt at Jerusalem and sacrifice and oblation will again be offered on its altar of burnt offerings and this suggests that the return to Palestine has not been very recent.[5]

6. We may add to these, from New Testament prophecy, the utter apostacy of professing Christendom; and consequently—

7. Its sects, uniting to form Babylon the Great.

We will consider these seriatim.

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[1] Dan. 9:27.
[2] Dan. 241; 7:24; Rev. 131, 17, 12.
[3] Dan. 2.33.
[4] Dan. 9:27.
[5] Dan. 9:27.

CHAPTER III.

The fourth world-empire, so long non-existent, to be revived: the bearing of the war on this. What will govern the boundaries of that empire? Will it include the United States?

"Every great holocaust in history has set free innumerable plans designed to prevent a recurrence of the catastrophe."*

Nor has the present war been any exception. It has developed unanswerable arguments for the substitution of some expedient that shall give a hope, (however vain) of a durable peace in the place of the utterly discredited "balance of power." The very first article of the "Peace of Rome" (as it has already been significantly called) may well be an attempt to unify the interests of the contending nations by the formation of a confederacy, similar to that of the "United States of America." In this we say nothing that is not plainly seen and constantly avowed by men who, it is possible, neither know nor care anything about Scripture; but who will, in carrying out this expedient, fulfill what Scripture plainly reveals. These United States would be but another name for the ancient fourth world-empire, the Roman, which Scripture most clearly assures us must be in existence at the sec-

*From North American Review of June, 1917.

ond coming of the Lord as it was at the first: "the beast that thou sawest **was,** and **is not;** and **shall ascend out** of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder . . . when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and shall be present (as all edd.) Rev. XVII. 8.

Amid the multitude of foreviews of post-bellum conditions that have been, and are being put forth just now, this idea of harmonizing opposing interests by a confederacy of nations, is prominent in all. For instance, our President in the address to the Senate, which has been loudly proclaimed as epochal insists that "the guarantees of a universal covenant" alone could effect a lasting peace. Again, "there must not only be a balance of power, but a community of power: not organized rivalries, but organized common peace." Again, "in every discussion of the peace that must end this war it is taken for granted that that peace must be followed by some definite concert of power, which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again. Every lover of mankind, every sane and thoughtful man, must take that for granted."

It is true that many questions will force themselves into the mind of "every sane and thoughtful man" as to whether these suggestions are practicable or take account of all the complex and adverse conditions that must be considered and for their realization be overcome; as, for instance, the

N. Y. Times, in a leading article highly approving of the address, yet naively adds: "The President of course knows that there are difficulties in the way, chief among them is the necessity of profoundly changing **the nature of man;"** a task sufficiently beyond all human powers as would, one would think, bespeak the utter futility of the suggestion that necessitated it. But with that we have nothing to do now, my only present purpose is to point out these two things: first, that the Scriptures foretell a revival of that fourth world-empire which now does not exist, but the place of which has been taken by "the balance of power," and secondly, that as a result of the present war the common consent of the intelligence of men also insists that a **confederacy** of the civilized nations is the only guarantee for that stable permanent peace so ardently longed for; and if there be a federal head to this confederacy, it would result in the revival of a world-empire.

But this brings up a question that I venture to think has not met with anything like the consideration it deserves: What will be the geographical limits of the revived Empire? What will determine its boundaries? I presume that the greater number of those for whom I write will answer that to be a renewal or revival of the Roman Empire it must follow the old boundaries of, and must include only that portion of the earth that was in that Empire, and must exclude none of it. So I too have long thought, having gathered this from the

honored teachers of the past. Thus I have assumed that Ireland must be separated from Great Britain, since Ireland was not included in the ancient Empire, nor has this eventually seemed at all impossible or improbable as events are shaping. India, of course, would also have to be excluded. Germany would also, on the same basis, have no part in that Empire. But where are we to stop? We must, in all consistency, say that Scotland must be divided, and all that lies north of the friths of Forth and Clyde must be as effectually cut off, as it was by the wall of the Emperor Severus, for that marked the northern limit of the march of the Roman legions in the island. We need not deny the possibility of this, but does it seem at all probable, or even reasonable: does Scripture necessitate it?

Then, again, we begin to ask ourselves: At what date of the old Empire are its boundaries to be renewed? At its high-water mark, or as it was when finally broken up by the invading hosts of Goths, Huns and Vandals? When in its incipiency, at its first formation, at its prime, in the years of its decline, or of its fall?

Further, has it not been one of the difficulties of our understanding of the prophetic Scriptures that this vast continent of North and South America seems to have no place in them? Here is one of the most powerful (if not at this date, absolutely the most powerful) of the so-called Christian nations on earth, by reason both of its numbers and

wealth; in both ever rapidly increasing—has this neither part nor lot in the prophecy? Does it not come within the sphere of the vision of prophecy at all; or only, as we have been told, in some such vague term as "the isles of the sea"? May Russia (Ezk. XXXVIII) and even China (Is. XLIX;12) be mentioned by name, but a vast continent be omitted altogether?

Consider again what the changes effected by new inventions and the perfecting of the old have wrought. They have brought this Western continent to an almost incalculable degree nearer to Europe, with all that that means for good or evil. As a Government report says: "An invasion of the United States to-day would involve a sea voyage of fewer difficulties and perils than faced Napoleon when he waited for favorable winds to take his armies across the English Channel for an attack upon Great Britain: our isolation is ended." Will it be possible to break these ties already formed and infinitely strengthened by the entry of the United States on the side of the Western Allies, or will they not eventuate in the inclusion of this great factor in the newly arranged Empire? Can there be two answers? Surely everything points to the interests of Europe and the Western Hemisphere becoming more and more identified. Thus, in Mr. Wilson's address to the Senate, already referred to and spoken even before the participation of this country in the war, he says: "No covenant of peace that does not include the peoples of the new world

can suffice to keep the future safe against war!" This is the desired end, to bring in a time of permanent, everlasting peace, never more to be broken by the unprecedented horrors of this war.

All these questions have led me to consider if there is not some basic principle that shall govern geographical boundaries of that world-empire of the future, and to ask, shall those boundaries be determined, not by a conquest made by carnal weapons, but by a conquest made by **spiritual** weapons —whether they be either of truth or of falsehood?

Will the voluntary adhesion of certain nations to some central authority, not only political, as we all believe, but to another, even a **spiritual** authority, govern the extent and bounds of the fourth World Empire when it is revived?

If so, that Empire will include all that part of Christendom that may give its voluntary adhesion to that central politico-spiritual authority.

Politically this is very clear. "Ten kingdoms," having autonomy, or governed by their own laws, will be united under one federal head—that head, the Roman Emperor of the future. He is to be seen in Scripture under various names: in the seventh chapter of Daniel he is the "little horn" that springs up in the last days, in the fourth Gentile monarchy: "little" as identified with one of the smaller kingdoms I presume) he is the **"prince that shall come"** (Dan. IX. 27), he is **"the beast from the sea"** and **"the beast,"** of Rev. XIII: he is the "seventh" head that also becomes the "eighth" of

the Empire in its very last and utterly Satanic form: the empire and its head being in every case fully identified in Rev. XVII, i.e., the empire is seen in its head—a form of speech with which our ordinary language and literature has made us quite familiar, as e. g. Shakespeare makes his characters address the king of France as "France," while Cleopatra is called "Egypt," etc. With all this, most of those for whom I write are quite familiar, and it is this well accepted truth that has led us to limit the reconstructed Empire to the geographical boundaries of the old, however uncertain we may be as to what these really are. We have sought for, and found, approximately ten nations **in Europe,** and thus we have concluded that the Roman Empire will be limited to **Europe;** or at least only as far beyond Europe as it was of old, say the northern shore of Africa and the Western part of Asia.

But the Holy Scriptures speak no less unambiguously of another unity to be formed—not on political but on **ecclesiastical** lines. In the symbolic language of prophecy—which is by no means unintelligible because symbolic—there is to be, not only a **"beast,"** but a **"woman"** sitting on that **"beast,"** Rev. XVII., 3: and this, interpreted in the simplest, clearest way, means that the revived Roman Empire will **support** a religious system, such as is always, in this symbolic language of prophecy, figured by a **"woman."** A unified worldly religious system then will be supported by a

unified World-Empire; both in utter anti-Christian apostacy: this is surely clear.

Nor shall we have the slightest difficulty in discerning who this "woman" is, or what she represents, for we are told that she bears her name on her forehead for all to read who desire to do so: "BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS": she is therefore the false, impure, world-embracing "Church" of that day; still, it may be, claiming to be the bride of Christ, but really a harlot. Spiritual fornication characterizes her, she is not apart from the world but a part of it, and united with it. As Babel of old was an attempt to strengthen the opposition to God of apostates among mankind by unifying them by "city" and "tower," so that Babylon of the future attempts the same thing. It is the unifying of the nations by a spiritual bond of diabolical falsehood, binding together the "ten kingdoms," so that as those kingdoms have one **political** head, so shall their unity be infinitely strengthened by having one **ecclesiastical** or religious head, Church and State being thus firmly bound together and covering all Christendom. Nor have we any great hesitation in giving that ecclesiastical head the name he now assumes, "His Holiness the Pope!" We shall have occasion to look at this more closely later, my only purpose now is to note that concurrently with the future restoration of the empire, once broken to pieces, there is a restoration of that pseudo-unity of the

Harlot Church; as it also was when the Empire ceased to be.

But now carefully note that the "beast"—the whole beast—supports, at least for a time, the "woman" (Rev. XVII. 3). Hence, wherever that woman is owned—wherever submission is made to her, in her head—wherever she is supported and upheld—**there is the beast.** That is, the boundaries of the revived Roman Empire will be determined by the adoption of the spurious Christianity of that day, having its head in Rome, or the Pope. Yet we must bear 2 Peter I. 20, in mind that no "prophecy of Scripture is of its own interpretation," we must seek the whole scope of prophecy, and this would seem clearly to demand that Russia at least be outside the future Roman Empire, for she will be "the Assyrian" of a day still further on, Ezek. XXXVIII. Therefore Russia is **not** included in the figure of the "woman" who sits on the "beast" in Rev. XVII.—Russia will not at that time support the Papacy nor be supported by the "beast from the sea." Russia will maintain her complete independence of Rome, as "the Assyrian" never owes his strength to any other nation on earth (Is. X. 13). It is always his proud boast that what he effects is by his own strength.*

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*If for no other reason, **and there are many others,** this would appear to forbid our identifying the Assyrian with "the King of the North" of Dan. VIII-XI, as is frequently done; for this latter is "mighty **but not by his own power**" (Dan. VIII. 24), in contrast with the Assyrian. Further, it is difficult to see how either the

Thus the strongest contrast with the truth will be developed in that day of the full manifestation of evil: in a trinity of wickedness and falsehood: the violent form of evil will head-up in the "beast from the sea"; the **corrupt** form of evil will at first be headed up in a unified system of anti-Christianity, while Judaism, also an apostate mass, its latter state worse than its first, (Matt.XII. 45) will head up (but later) in the "false prophet" he or the "beast from the land," ever in full league with the "beast from the sea," Rev. XIII., and all in deadly opposition to Christ Jesus, "The Lamb."

So there would appear no reason why this continent should not form a part of the revived Empire, even as in that address of the President to the Senate, from which I have so frequently quoted, a broad basis on which the U. S. would participate in arranging and upholding terms of peace was laid down, which if carried out would result in some form of union between all the nations, including the U. S., to form a League of Peace.

Assyria of the past, or the Russia of the present, could ever be figured by a **"little** horn," as "the King of the North." This points to a small state coming up from insignificant beginnings; but this does not affect the direct line of our inquiry.

CHAPTER IV.

The revived Roman Empire will be composed of two opposing political principles, called in the symbolic language of prophecy, "iron" and "clay."

But while it is clear that the fourth World-Empire will be revived, democratic principles have too thoroughly permeated both the old world and the new to permit of a return to anything like the unmixed monarchical government with which it closed, and this, too, is as clearly recognized by Scripture as by the statesmen of the world. For instance, to give a quotation from an unlikely source: "This infamous militarism, the cancer of contemporary Europe, has assumed an absolute and unprecedented preponderance since universal military service, a republican institution, has been united (forming the most monstrous of hybrids) with the permanent army that serves absolute and dynastic ends."

So wrote the German scientist, Ernest Haeckel, in 1870, in his "History of Creation," and in so writing of a "monstrous hybrid" of absolutism and republicanism, he accorded, although perfectly unconsciously, with another writer who twenty-five centuries before this wrote, of the last condition of Gentile imperialism, **"and whereas thou sawest iron**

*Quoted in "Literary Digest" of January 17th, 1917.

mixed with miry clay they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another even as iron is not mixed with clay," in other words, as Haeckel wrote it is a "monstrous hybrid."

Well may we ask then with all earnestness what these symbols mean; and are there any evidences of these elements "iron" and "clay" apparent to-day in this present struggle?

They are found in the second chapter of Daniel, in which the first emperor, and he to whom the God of Heaven Himself gave absolute authority over all nations, Nebuchadnezzar, dreams; but the dream fades from his mind as he awakens, and yet leaves him weighted with a profound sense of its significance: so much so that he cannot rest till it is recalled and interpreted. First, as always in God's ways, all the human science of the day has to confess its helplessness, and not till that is done, does God intervene; and a young Hebrew captive, recalls and interprets the lost dream for the King.

He has seen a Colossus composed of four gradually deteriorating metals, from the head of "gold" till in the feet and toes it even becomes partly "clay." These metals, Daniel tells the king, figure a succession of "kingdoms" or empires; each (and this is an important detail) seen as identified with its government or head; as **"thou art this head of gold."** This did not mean that Nebuchadnezzar was personally "gold," although the next chapter indicates that he thought so—it was his **kingdom,** the

character of his **government,** his **authority,** which, **direct from God** as it was with no responsibility to those whom he ruled; but with every responsibility to the One from Whom he had received that authority, was "gold:" the metal of the highest commercial value; and indeed, when thus used symbolically, speaking of what was purely divine, as it is written, "Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of Heaven hath given thee" (a direct gift, and not by the suffrages of the governed) "a kingdom, power, and strength and glory."

The authority given thus divinely to this first emperor was altogether unlimited, as it is written **"whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive"** (Chap V. 19). Here is the basis for that common expression, **"the divine right of kings";** but that only is another illustration of the twist that man always gives to everything to his own exaltation: the correct term would be "the heavy **responsibility** of kings" to the One true Source of power, the God from whom all their authority comes.

That first empire passed away, and was followed by one that is called inferior, and to express that inferiority, is figured by the inferior metal, "silver." In what then did the inferiority consist? Not in extent: not in moral qualities; in neither of these respects could inferiority be proved; but solely in the change **in the character of the authority.** For men soon found that it was anything but safe to leave unlimited authority in the hands of a man like

themselves; so then and there commenced that agitation to limit authority that has been going on ever since, and is still going on. King Darius the Mede could not "keep alive whom he would," for his hands were so tied by law that, though he "labored till the going down of the sun to deliver Daniel," he was powerless—that is, his authority was too weak to carry out even a just act: law had tied his hands. That authority then, monarchical though it was, not derived from the people, but from above, was surely "inferior" to that of Nebuchadnezzar.

But the very word "inferior" helps us, for it is literally "more earthly" and is identically the same word that is actually translated "earth" in Chap. II., 35 and 39. Thus this very word points to the road being travelled, it leads down, in its increasing "earthliness," to the **"clay"** or sherd of the last condition.

The third empire follows; and the authority of the empire of Greece, while still metal, is "brass," for Alexander received his authority from, and it was sustained by his army: it was the initiation of modern "militarism"; and his generals, not his sons, succeeded to his empire. Not merely was the government limited by law, but it began to **depend** upon the will of the governed, hence "brass."

The fourth was, as we know, the Roman; and our Holy Scriptures give us in a Pilate, a Herod, a Felix and a Festus the clear reason for its being figured by the inferior "iron," for every one of these governors, or representatives of that govern-

ment, evidenced the inferior character of their authority, in that they committed all injustices, even to crucifying the Son of God, because **"it pleased the Jews!"** The government was governed by the governed—and that is surely "inferior" government.

Yet is "iron" strong, and breaks in pieces all metals; so this fourth empire, in its external conflicts with other nations, was for many centuries irresistible. Externally strong, intrinsically inferior; "iron" perfectly figured both characters. This internal inferiority and this strength shall both be in it when restored, for it shall have apparently irresistible resources, so that men shall say "who is able to make war" with it? It shall, it is assumed, put an end to all war, and render it impossible. Rev. XIII. 4: Yet shall its government be governed by the governed, and so be inferior.

But at that time another ingredient shall appear with the "iron"; for the **"feet were part of iron and part of clay."** The depreciation that began with the Medo-Persian being "more earthly" is now, in part at least, altogether **"earth."** Nor is the word "clay" as exact an equivalent of the Chaldaic word as it should be; for clay is adhesive, and not "brittle," as is this (verse 42). It should be "sherd" or baked clay, or earthenware; so this last form of Gentile imperialism shall have in it the strength of iron, and the brittleness of earthenware. What is then figured by the potsherd or earthenware? Potsherd is ever in Scripture a symbol of poor man in

the flesh, as Is. XLV. 9: "Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth." It aptly figures man in his low condition and frailty. Thus surely if the metals speak of authority from **above,** the **potsherd** speaks of authority **solely from beneath,** and absolutely rejecting the thoughts of authority being conferred from above at all. If the metal figure "monarchy" with claims to divine rights, "potsherd" figures "democracy" with utter rejection of God altogether. If the metal speaks of the **centralization** of authority, the strong hand of a centralized government having all the strength of the empire at its control, that force or strength being its only law or limitation: the "potsherd," with little element of cohesion in it, would aptly figure a conglomeration of human wills that easily disintegrate through their interests being opposed or thought to be opposed, and thus be a very distinct cause of weakness. Now this Scripture (Dan. II.) tells us that when revived, not only shall the empire (the feet), but each one of its component kingdoms (the toes) be made up of these two opposing constituents.*

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*It may be that the present form of the British Empire will afford a kind of pattern of what may obtain in the coming world-empire. King George **reigns;** the people, by their elect representatives, **govern.** It is both a monarchy and a democracy: king and commons go along together harmoniously. It is true that the authority of the king is limited, yet is he a very needful constituent of the government, for, as federal head, having no part in the ever-changing party government, he unifies all parties, and the whole scattered Empire itself. But while thus

Can we not "discern the face of the earth?" Are there not both these **principles** to be clearly discerned—at least in **embryo;** for as the empire is not yet in existence, its elements can hardly be fully developed; but, in Christendom, do not all discern—under various names—these two elements of iron and clay (however modified as it is as yet), in what may be called monarchy and democracy?

But one step further, are not these two opposing principles ranged against one another in the contending belligerents? Beyond all controversy they are. No one can read the daily issues from the presses of the world without noting how men at large—who, again be it said, know little and care less for Scripture—recognize—and increasingly clearly recognized—that the conflict is between the principles of monarchy (not so limited as to be really democratic, as Great Britain) and democracy.

Nor does this mean that in each of the nations, on both sides, there are not in some measure at least, both these factors. Germany on the one hand has its Liebknecht and Socialism—which is but the most advanced form of Democracy—becoming increasingly powerful, while on the other, in the most democratic of countries, there are not lacking re-

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exceedingly useful, it would be impossible, even were it expedient, to elect him by popularl suffrage in a sphere so widely extended.

This state of things may seem an anomaly to us, yet it has gone along quite long enough to evidence the possibility of such an anomaly existing, and indeed being necessary in the still more extended world-empire exactly as foretold by the prophetic Scriptures.

actionary elements that tend back to a monarchical form. But the **characteristic** principle of the Central Powers may be exemplified by the utterances of the German Kaiser, who tells his armies that "There is but one law and that is **my** law,"[1] or by his famous inscription in the Golden Book at Munich, **"Regis voluntas suprema lex esto,"** "Let the will of the king be the supreme law,"[2] while democracy is distinctly the characteristic principle of government of the Western Powers.[3]

Now, comparing what the Word of God plainly tells us (as we have seen) **shall** be in the revived Empire with the present conditions, the inevitable deductions would be either that if democracy sweeps over the earth, and the "iron" is apparently exterminated, it can be but a temporary delay to the divine purposes, which must inevitably be finally fulfilled, for the final form of the Empire must have the "iron" as well as the "earthenware," and with neither of these in such ascendancy as to nullify the other altogether.

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[1]From **"Germania contra mundum,"** by the late Lord Cromer.

[2]Much as we may deprecate such a sentiment, none can deny that it is exactly what was true of the first Gentile who held his commission alone from God: he gave account of his doings to no man—that authority was "gold," but "gold" only as it was held in **direct responsibility to Him** from Whom all the authority was derived. The final form of all earth's government will be "gold," absolute power in the hands of absolute beneficence: possible only in our Lord Jesus.

[3]Since the above was written Russia has come into the line of democracy.

Second: that a decisive victory is likely to be effected—a crushing defeat to be suffered, by neither side, or its characteristic principle would vanish.

Assume, simply for the sake of argument, that the war has resulted in a decisive victory for the Teuton allies, a crushing defeat of the Western Powers, and improbable as this may now appear, more unlikely things have happened. Let us try to imagine that the French and British armies have been practically exterminated; Russia has been forced, or has willingly accepted, a humiliating peace, or that the British navy has been defeated, possibly by some new invention of science; or that by increased numbers and efficiency, submarines have actually starved the island Kingdom into submission—Europe would soon lie as prostrate as Belgium or Servia at the feet of Germany. Can there be any doubt as to Germany imposing her principles of rule included in her "Kultur," as she terms it, on the conquered? Has she not claimed it as her mission on the earth to force the blessings of this "Kultur," the "order" that can alone be maintained by her iron rule, on a world whether willing or unwilling? Would not centralization of authority—call it by whatever name you will—be absolutely dominant, at least in Europe, and would this country, now involved as it is, be unaffected?

On the other hand, assume the Teuton Allies to be crushingly defeated, would the "iron" be unaffected? It is constantly and freely asserted by

many whose sympathies are evidenced by the assertion, that the first clear evidence of the near approach of peace will be the overthrow of the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg dynasties. Every one who assumes to be in any degree a "man of vision" —as the term is—foresees nothing but all the world becoming, either at one stroke, or by degrees, as indeed it seems to be becoming, one great expression of a "government of the people, by the people, for the people." Mr. Wilson has not always been fortunate in the catchwords he has created, but in his late address he has struck a popular note in claiming that the object of the war was "to make the world safe for democracy." While Mr. Asquith says "the fortunes and faith of democracy have been brought into peril by Germany," Lord Curzon apparently identifies autocracy with the devil himself, for he calls the war "a great uprising to put an end to the rule of Satan on the earth"—rather an ambitious aim, that perhaps is not altogether without the approval of that proud spirit who knows well its vanity and fatuity.

A decisive victory, then, of either contestant, would mean the elimination of the principle of government that it stood for, at least for a time.

But in the day of O. T. prophecy again being fulfilled, what do we find? The "iron" mixed with the "clay," neither of the two principles figured by iron and clay has been, in that day, eliminated. The iron of monarchy is again seen exactly as it was in the legs of the image, as it was in the old Empire. Then, as far as Scripture throws light on

the issue of the war, it would seem that a compromise alone is its most probable ending: a compromise by which both of these irreconcilable elements, "iron" and "clay" come to some formal and external reconciliation, and endeavor in each of the kingdoms, or countries, composing the Empire, to get along together, as it is written **"and whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided. . . . . but they shall not cleave one to another even as iron is not mixed with clay"** (Dan. II. 41 to 43), that is, the principle of authority being divinely given and coming alone from **above,** and the principle of authority coming solely from the people **below,** shall both be side by side in the revived Empire, but they shall never really coalesce or fuse together—that is as impossible as to mix iron with earthenware.

Let us ask then how do present conditions conform to this clear forecast of Scripture? I write after three years of war. The losses it has occasioned to humanity even to this date are simply incalculable. A writer in "The Nation" estimated (as he claimed) conservatively, that even up to October 31st, 1916, **six millions of youth had been actually killed and as many more permanently injured,** and even if this were an exaggeration, time has made, or will soon make it, a minimizing. Think of three-fourths of the voters of the U. S. being wiped out altogether as producers! Or to aid in realizing what 6,000,000 killed means: put

the bodies in a line, head to foot—that line starting from the coast of Maine would stretch unbroken, entirely across the continent till stopped by the Pacific ocean, and could then be turned and carried back, still unbroken, to its starting point, leaving still some over. Nor does this take any account of the myriads that have perished through famine or exposure. Then who can estimate the misery—the mental and physical anguish that this represents! Financially the war-debts incurred up to the date of the article being written had gone far beyond all our powers of apprehension —they have become practically unlimited. Nor does this tell all the sad story; for to it must be added the destruction of whole villages, hamlets, prosperous towns and wealthy cities. Further, if the war stopped to-day its cost would not. Then the expense of demobilization would have to be met, pensions and reconstructions generally without end!

Consider, too, the effect upon the civilized world of the withdrawal of myriads from their usual avocations. Take one field alone: agriculture is necessarily more or less neglected, agricultural laborers have found a more profitable market for their labor in munition plants, consequently not merely the actual belligerents, but the **world** to-day faces such a shortage of crops as threatens a severe **world-**wide scarcity, and every nation has to take strong governmental measures to avoid this. All the earth is thus involved and "tried."

But what **clear** evidence is there of the end being in sight? Nothing really decisive has been attained by all this outlay of blood and treasure: the "fearful equipoise," the deadly balance of power is still more or less maintained.

What reasonable man can deny that the road on which all the belligerents are hastening leads to utter ruin? The resources of the world are being rapidly consumed in this flame of war. It is true that each group of belligerents endeavors to figure out that its opponents will become exhausted first; but to one who looks at them from another point of view—the cold standpoint of reason—they would still appear sufficiently evenly matched as to make the outcome of a policy of attrition anything but a satisfactory outlook for either. It is of course not impossible that the issue may come on this line; but, if it goes on much longer, the victor himself would be, in that case, nearly, if not quite, at his last gasp.

Compromise then would appear (if all passion, all moral sentiment, whether just or unjust, could be silenced, and cold reason alone be heard—reason pleading alone for a cessation of profitless horrors) altogether the most reasonable (I do not say the most just or morally right) end of the struggle, not merely in the light of prevailing conditions, but—and it is the only important thing with us—**also of Scripture.**

But here a fresh complication meets us. The war has been so carried on as to render the very thought

of compromise little less than nauseous; at least to one group of the contending factions.

My purpose is not to discuss the merits of the war; where the guilt of its beginning lies, or of the manner of its conduct; but that purpose does not permit me to ignore the effect of the supercilious treatment of solemn treaties, the shattering of every remnant of confidence in such; the consequent systematized oppressions, such cruelties and barbarities as have torn to shreds the decent garments of a "Christian Civilization." Thus the very thought of any compromise between the belligerents which naturally can only be based on political treaty—a foundation that the "scrap of paper" episode has practically destroyed—is "impossible" as men use the term; while to compromise with shameless barbarians is equally repulsive. Thus present conditions (as I write at least) point both to compromise being the only reasonable issue, and yet the door is fast barred against that one issue! If a crushing victory for either side is almost unthinkable, since its cost would be exhaustive to the victor; if a voluntary compromise (and by "voluntary" I simply mean not due to any external human force intervening) is still more so, is there possibly a third alternative? Is it not at least **possible**—nay, granting the possibility, is it not even **probable**—is it not the most reasonable probability of all, for any who have the "oracles of God" in their hands to expect that God Himself should interpose, and, by some extraordinary event, by the very terror

and wonder it would excite, force to that compromise which, however inevitable it would appear to be, if universal ruin is not to result, (and which the prophetic Scriptures seem to indicate as the most probable outcome), yet nothing else or less is able to effect?

We at least **know,** on the sure testimony of the Word of God, of just such an event. Few who read these lines will have any question as to what is referred to—for it has been long looked for. We have constantly insisted that the true hope of every Christian is not to die, and so "to be with Christ" far better than the present life as this is; but this leaves the Lord Jesus dethroned, it leaves the earth without its true King, and groaning still under the usurper, Satan, whose reign is evidenced in these very horrors, with periodic drenchings of blood and chronic misery, for it leaves man exactly as he is to-day. Is that better? Surely rather is it, as already said, for the Lord Himself to come as the Bright and Morning Star, which shall eventuate in the elimination of Satan from heaven—to the still greater sorrow of the earth, Rev. XII. 12—and then to complete that coming as Sun of righteousness, which shall indeed eventuate as nothing else in all the universe can, in the elimination of Satan from the earth, to its great joy and millenial peace.

The worldling will turn from this with a shrug; scoffers will cry, "Where is the promise of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation"

(2 Peter III): no divine interposition has since occurred, nor is ever again to be expected. But the thoughtful, sober Christian will be "more noble," and search the Scriptures, and see if they do not give the clearest basis for such a **hope,** and thus the lamp of prophecy shall so shine that what depresses, perplexes and terrifies the worldling shall fill the believers with increased confidence and ever-brightening hope.

CHAPTER V.

The effect of the war on the Jew. Will it lead to his restoration to Palestine?

"Give me in one word, a proof of the truth of revealed religion," said Frederick the Great of Prussia to his court-chaplain.

"The Jews, your Majesty," was the immediate answer. Whether this actually occurred or not is a matter of small importance. We recognize that no more satisfactory answer could possibly be given to such a question than that one word, **"The Jews."**

Their past history from their very beginning as a people, their peculiar spiritual glory, first seen in the blessing of Noah on their progenitor Shem; in the calling of their father Abraham by the God of glory appearing to him in Charran; in the divine promise that in him, and in his seed, should all the nations of the earth be blessed; in the oracles of God being placed in their trust; in that it was of them, as after the flesh, that Christ came: then, on the other side, their correspondingly aggravated guilt in the rejection of their Messiah; their consequent scattering; their marvellous preservation;

their humiliation through long centuries; their present revived national aspirations; the clear prophecies that speak of their restoration to their land, and what shall befall them there till they are fully restored to the eternal favor of Jehovah their God—all combine to make them by far the most striking phenomenon of all the many that press upon us in these days. For if the political arena must have in it, in that fast approaching day, the same principal actors as at the tragedy of Calvary, and for this the Gentile Roman Empire that had its part in that great guilt, must be restored to receive its retribution, so the other participant, the Jew, must again be where he then was: in the land of Palestine to pass through his "time of trouble," the "great tribulation"; and, whatever the outcome of the present war, it seems as sure as anything in the future can be, that it will eventuate in the political benefit and probable restoration to his land of the Jew.

Indeed, this has become one of the common convictions of the day among statesmen, politicians, and men of the world, many of whom would rather the Scriptures were proved false than true. Even our own eyes see what is in striking accord with that probability. For eighteen centuries the Jewish nation has been dead and buried among the nations of the earth. Comparatively recently the national sap has begun again to flow; national aspirations have revived; Zionism, as it is called, has come, and apparently "come to stay" as men speak; and the

return of the scattered people to their land is no longer a secret confined to the student of the inspired page—no longer an aspiration held by a few aged "orthodox" representatives of this ancient people: it is one of the logical and necessary outcomes of the present state of things, from a purely political point of view. One would say therefore that the recovery of Jerusalem and Palestine by the Jews was an eventuality equally probable, whether one or the other of the contending groups of nations be the victors; or if neither of them be so, and the end come in some form of compromise. We can at least see how perfectly this would accord with the divine word written 2,500 years ago.

Let me in the briefest and most superficial way refer to the closing verses of the well-known prophecy of Daniel in his ninth chapter: **"and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing:"** that is, of all that is rightfully his: Throne, Crown, Kingdom, People—nothing shall He have; but on the contrary, shall be executed, for this violent form of death is involved in the word "cut off." That has surely been fulfilled to the latter on the cross of Calvary.

Next: **"the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary":** that is, as a consequence of this rejection of their own Messiah the Prince (V. 25), a people connected with another "prince" shall destroy the guilty city Jerusalem, with its Sanctuary, now left desolate. This we know perfectly well was done by the

Romans (A. D. 70). The "coming prince" then must be the head of a future Roman Empire. He has not then even yet come to this very day.

..**"and the end therof shall be with a flood":** as a rushing flood sweeps away everything in its path, so Jerusalem and its people should be swept away—as surely was the case.

"And to the end—War!—the desolations determined" (as it may, and I believe, should be translated) that is, all through the centuries, down to that very "end" that is determined, that poor people shall be subject to conflict, for they have ranged themselves against their own Lord, and He is against them as a people. Down to the very end is "War," and that means the desolations determined in Jehovah's counsels.

Most surely not one word has fallen to the ground, nor shall one word of what remains unfulfilled, to which we now turn in verse 27:

"And he (that is the "prince" who was, at the destruction of Jerusalem still to come, but who shall at this time that the prophecy begins to be fulfilled again, be actually come: therefore there has been a long interval of nearly 2,000 years quite unnoticed between these two verses, but which however may be clearly seen in such prophecies as Hoshen III. 4) **shall confirm a covenant with the many** (the mass of the Jews who shall, at that time have returned to their land in unbelief in Jesus as their promised Messiah) **for one week** (of years i.e. for seven years). But for this prophecy to be fulfilled, and

for the Jew to be restored to his land in such sort as to be able to make such a treaty at all, the first necessity is that the present Gentile occupant of that land be expelled from it and a Jewish organized State be established in its place.

Now in the answer of the "Entente Allies" to Germany's proposed peace conference, one of the terms of any possible peace reads "the enfranchisement of populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turk: the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman Empire, decidedly alien to western civilization," and this is recognized as meaning the "liberation of the Armenians, Arabs, Syrians from Turkish rule" and this would surely involve the restoration of an independent State in Syria or Palestine. What State **could** that be but Jewish?

Thus divine counsels and human policies are again in one line.

But all statesmen recognize that a feeble Jewish State in Palestine would feel its need of the protection of that friendly Power, or Powers, to which it owed its renewed existence, and that protection would as surely and naturally as possible be obtained by the very "covenant," or treaty, referred to by their prophet Daniel. Nor does this lack further clear confirmation: for assume such a treaty to have been effected, could it not then be said of that State, seen in its head or executive: **"his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power"** (Dan. VII. 24)? Most surely it could. He would have at his back all the forces of the confederated nations

of Europe and (as I now believe) of America, too. In this way he would exercise all the power of the first beast that was before him," who is, in Chap. XI. 38 called **"The God of forces."** For that "first-beast" is most surely the revived Empire, also seen in its head or executive, and the whole plan of prophecy thus falls into such perfect accord, both with itself, and with present conditions, that we are assured of the correctness of our interpretation of it thus far.

So widely recognized has this readiness of a people for a country and a country for a people become, that, while it is of the first importance, there is no need for any lengthy comment. The Jew is awaiting with earnest expectation the recall to his divine patrimony, and no other country will satisfy him. The British Government, within the memory of most of my readers, offered the Zionists a home in a beautiful section of East Africa, with a fertile soil, and temperate climate; it was declined with grateful acknowledgments: "Palestine or continued exile" were, and still are, the only alternatives for the orthodox Jew. Through centuries of weary wandering, scattered through every land, speaking every tongue, from father to son—from father to son—has been passed down through a long line of sorrow this one strange, unique unparalleled hope of being again a nation in the land that was their own.

Now this war threatens the very existence of the stranger that has his foot on that land as it threatens no other of the combatants. Let either side be

victor, no nation on the other would be swept out of all its possessions, as is so emphatically and frequently asserted by both sides. Each protests, and no doubt sincerely enough, that it has no intention of exterminatnig its adversary. But the British Premier distinctly says "We are fighting for the doctrine that the Turk is incapable of governing any civilized race," and that means, if it means anything, that the Turk shall be left with as little footing in Palestine as in Europe.

Both events, the restoration of the Jew, the expulsion of the Turk, are I believe clearly foretold in the Scriptures; the one people shall be eliminated to make way for the restoration of the other—this we shall consider later.

Again then let us recur to the Lord's words: **"Behold the fig tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth ye see and know of your own selves that summer is nigh at hand"** Luke XXI. 29-30. Now the fig tree is ever among trees the symbol of the Jew.[1] Is not then this "fig tree," after a long winter, during which it has lain dormant, again shewing clear evidences of returning vitality. The sap of national aspiration is beginning to flow as it has not done since Titus captured Jerusalem. Who can shut his eyes to the portent? If it portends Israel's redemption drawing nigh, how much nearer ours? Nor the fig tree alone; "all the trees"; or all the nations familiar to us through O. T. prophecy are similarly being raised from their

[1] 1 Jeremiah xxiv.

winter's sleep, to play the part in the earth assigned them in the future, after the rapture of all who have been "partakers of the heavenly calling."

Egypt must provide the "king of the south" (Dan. XI.) in the future as in the past; and under the wing of Great Britain, Egypt, long without national life, is shooting forth once more as a nation; and one result of the Turk entering the war has been that he has lost all suzerainty over Egypt.

Greece is another "tree" that has long been dormant, for the same Turkish Power put out the life of that nation; yet Greece has begun to take its place among the nations of the prophetic earth. It must be admitted that the course of Greece during the present war—the government, strongly bound by its king's ties of marriage to the Central Powers, pulling one way; the mass of the people, with long-inherited attachment to the Powers to which the nation owed its recovery, tending the other, is perplexing, and the issue must be awaited. It would however appear only a reasonable deduction that as Egypt is to give the king of the south as in the days of the Ptolemies, so Greece may be expected to provide "the king of the north," as in the days of the Seleucidae.

Another "tree" in the west, Italy, has revived marvellously within the memory of many now living, and is surely destined to fill a large place in the future as in the past.

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[1]Since writing the above Greece has taken her place beside the Entente Powers.

In a word, the nations are getting into the very conditions in which O. T. prophecy must find them when it begins to be fulfilled—but of all these "trees" the revival of none is so striking as that of the "fig": Israel. Yet before any of these prophecies are absolutely fulfilled every Christian will be with the Lord for ever—Oh, may **we** not lift up **our** heads for our redemption (of the body Rom. VIII. 23) draweth very nigh.

CHAPTER VI.

The Book of Revelation and the War.

There is but one strictly prophetic book in the N. T. It ends and completes the inspired volume and has on it the imprint of its place in the constantly repeated number of completeness—seven.

It has ever been of the most profound interest to all students of Scripture and the mass of literature that has come down to us graphically witnesses to the interest and—it must be admitted—to the divergent views of those students. These divergencies have been made the basis of a charge that the book itself is quite incomprehensible. Nor is this slur confined in our day, to infidelity, either openly, avowed, as in an Ingersoll, or hidden under cover of a clerical garment, as in that popular Brooklyn clergyman who stigmatizes it as "dream literature"; but even Christians who revere the whole Bible as the Word of God, join in this dishonoring reprobation of its last book, at least by avoiding it, and plead in extenuation that it is beyond their capacity; and so doubtless it is, if God the Holy Spirit be not really with us to "lead us into all truth and to shew us things to come." The question, **then,** would be, is it beyond the powers of Him who is its true Author, and **can** that be a question? Or may

not this incapability be a just cause for judging ourselves for a worldly conformity that so grieves that divine Comforter that He has rather to convince us still of sin, than to show us things to come (John XVI)?

But the all-wise God has foreseen just this condition, and would offset all that might discourage by His word "blessed is he that" (even) "readeth."

Nor, if we look candidly and boldly at this objection as to so many divergent views, need we be alarmed; for there are but three broad basic differences in different systems of interpretation, called "preterite," "historical" and "future." Of these the first holds little place among the Lord's people of to-day. It assumes that the whole prophecy received its final fulfillment even in John's day—and this, since it holds so very little place, we need not pursue further.

But this leaves only **two** divergent principles of interpretation. Of these, the historical assumes that the fulfillment has been running through the history of Christendom, and is now approaching its finish in the last "vials."

The "future," in its extreme form, puts the fulfillment of all—even of the seven churches—into the future: nothing is for the Christian, all is Jewish; but, as another justly remarks, "Incompetency is written on this view from first to last," so we need not further consider it. Apart from this, the futurist teaches that all **after the third chapter**

remains to be fulfilled after the church is caught up out of this scene altogether.

Thus then all broad basic divergencies narrow down to just two, and the question is, must we choose one of these, and throw ourselves into the conflict against the other? It would not be an encouraging prospect; for, if we believe what the more violent partizans of each say of the other, we should reject **both,** for their contentions result in their mutual destruction. It is this, it is to be feared, drives so many from a study of the book altogether, for if **each is** to be believed in its attacks on the other, **neither** is credible at all!

But so radical a conclusion is fairly open to question. When one considers, not merely the large number of true Christians that are in, and compose these rival schools, but the genuine and sober piety, the spirit of prayerful dependence manifested on both sides, the fidelity with which they honor the Scriptures by their practical obedience, the clear evidence that **all** give of being taught of the Holy Spirit in other lines of truth, we ask, "Is it not far more probable that both are in measure **right,** than that both are **altogether wrong?"** We have long ago heard that "thy commandment is exceeding broad" (Psalm CXI. 96), and may not this last wonderful book of the inspired volume be at least "broad" enough to cover both of these principles?

This, at all events, has long been the ground taken by many of those who are recognized, I think I may say, by the common consent of all Chris-

tians as having been peculiarly "taught of God," as any one at all acquainted with the writings of Darby, Grant, Kelly and many others, will recognize.[1]

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[1]Thus, to give an instance from one of these writers, Mr. Kelly wrote in his valuable work on Revelation: "Years before the first edition of the 'Horae' (that is, Elliot's great work on the historical side), appeared in 1844, there were Christians who waited for Christ and looked for a personal antichrist with the momentous consequences of both views, yet **held the general application of the Apocalypse to the Saints and to world since the time of St. John as stated in my lectures.**" That is, there have been for many years interpreters of Revelation who held that both the historical and future had their place.

Again: "I am simply comparing the thoughts of such as admit a **partial application of the Rev.** to the past; but believe the grand and close fulfillment of its central prophetic visions—VI to XVI.—will be after the translation of those set forth by the elder and glorified saints, and in order to their appearing with them in glory." This puts the two principles in their relative place of importance—the historical being shadowy, the future final.

"It must be borne in mind that our (Mr. Trotter's and my) hypothesis **assumes a two fold application** . . . . In short, the epistle when applied to literal Thyatira in St. John's days, while for him who has ears to hear; there is much to intimate a further reference to a time when Jezebel and her children might have the upper hand," etc. A further defence of both the historical and prophetic view of the letters to the churches.

"From the days of Abbot Joachim till our own, it is impossible to deny that some of the most godly and thoughtful students of the book have embraced the view of a **prophetic as well as historical sense** of these epistles." That is, this twofold principle of interpretation is not a novelty.

"On the protracted Protestant scheme which I believe to have a certain measure of truth," etc., etc.

It is quite true that as the "Historical" claimed for a long time the whole stage, and left no room at all for the "Future;" so this latter, even when it did not eliminate the historical entirely, retaliated by making so little of it as not merely to put it in a secondary place, which if both be allowed, it must necessarily occupy; but to put it almost out of sight altogether, till a younger generation of teachers, not only overlook, but are now contending that it is the "Historical" interpretation that has no standing at all.

Surely the whole plan on which prophecy has been written—the very spirit of prophecy—would lead one to look for a double fulfillment, the earlier foreshadowing of the later. Elias was foretold as first to come: then John the Baptist, if received, **was** Elias; yet he, being rejected, Elias is **still** "to come and restore all things." John was the foreshadowing of the "Elias" to come. So let any one read carefully the book of Isaiah, and he will not fail to find foretellings that have had a partial fulfillment in the invasions, captivities, deliverances of Judah and Jerusalem in the past, and yet these so evidently lack anything like adequacy, that their full and definite fulfillment lies still in the future. So, too, consider the scene on the Holy Mount—while it does not **fulfill,** yet it provides a most perfect and beautiful **foreshadowing** of the Coming Kingdom, so often and so long foretold. All this, too, is but in line with God's gracious ways of giving a **pattern** to aid us, as when he told Moses how to make the

tabernacle, He gave him also a pattern in the Mount. We must most certainly let these considerations affect our judgment as to the twofold interpretation of the one great N. T. book of prophecy: Revelation.

CHAPTER VII.

The Book of Revelation and the War (continued).

Let us then turn to this, and again test the very ground-work of our interpretation. This we rest, and with assured confidence, on the divinely given, threefold division of the book in the commission to John to write, first what he had already "seen," then the "things that are" or what was then present; and lastly the "things that shall be after these things," or what should come to pass after those "present things" were over (Rev. I. 19).

As to the first, there would appear no possibility for any misunderstanding, and John wrote, in the first chapter, what he had "seen" of the Lord Jesus in all His judicial glory, judging in the midst of the candlesticks or churches.

But there is a link between "the things that he had seen" and "the things that are"; **the former provide what the latter need.** Every feature of judicial glory in which the Lord was seen furnishes exactly the character needed to meet the conditions of one or the other of the Churches. For instance, John "saw" that this One of unrivaled dignity had "in his right hand seven stars": this provides the presentation to the Church of Ephesus: **"These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his**

right hand." Again, "Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword"—provides the clear presentation needed by the Church in Pergamos; and so on all through. (Rev. II. 12).

Now this at once gives us its aid in understanding "the things that are," for it suggests that they too are not altogether disconnected at least from "the things that shall be after" them.

There is no question but that we may find "the things that are" in the next two chapters of the book. Here we have seven letters addressed by the Lord Jesus Himself, through and by the Spirit to seven Churches, which we may safely assume to have been actually and literally existent in Asia at that time. That is, these seven Churches in the first place represented the Church as a whole and thus formed "the things that are" at that time, but in addition to this, assuming that we had been in one of them, say Ephesus, we should have had no question or hesitation in applying the letter addressed to Ephesus to ourselves—that at least would appear incontrovertible. Nor can these seven Churches, in and by themselves, fulfill that comprehensive term, "the things that are"; for there were other Churches which must have had some part in those "things" since they, too, were existent: so that these seven did not actually include them all as would be necessary if they were **in themselves** "the things that are." We must remember that all was "signified" to John and therefore recognize that the very number "seven" is a **sign.** It speaks of com-

pleteness, and **signifies** that the seven historical literal Churches represented the whole Church on earth at that time; for thus, and only thus, could they be "the things that are." As they passed away so, in this sense, did "the things that are" pass with them.

Again, the literal historical churches to which the Lord directed these letters to be written, were still, at this time, **as originally founded.** No candlestick had as yet been removed. They were all still **apostolic** churches, as we may say—founded directly by the apostle Paul. They were **thus,** in this sense, "the things that are" in that first century of the Church's responsibility to witness to their absent Lord, and as such also, they soon passed away.

This being the case, the third division of the book would have commenced after those literal churches then existent, **had** passed away as testimonies to Christ on the earth; and this, it is undeniable, they have long done.

For these letters could not possibly be addressed to those historic literal Churches **to-day;** for even assuming that there are any such Christian churches at all, in these localities, they are certainly not in the same conditions as are here recognized; conditions that are the actual causes for, and govern the contents of the letters. In a word, they are no longer "the things that are" in a literal sense, at all, nor have they been so for nearly nineteen centuries. Conditions are ever changing in local churches from year to year; and as soon as they did

change in these seven "the things that are" must have passed away in some sense, and "the things which shall be after these things" must have begun, in the same sense. Surely this too is beyond controversy; but it is of the last importance in our inquiry.

"The things that shall be after these things" would then consist of events that have occurred in that part of the earth that has taken the place of those Churches, as professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: that is, what is now called Christendom, composed to-day of so-called Christian nations, with the true Church of God hidden away among them, as it were.

But while this may fairly be claimed, yet another consideration forces us to question if an interpretation, depending not altogether, but more or less on uncertain human history, often distorted by prejudice or obscured by ignorance, can possibly be the **final** intention of the Spirit of Christ either in these letters or what follows.

The strange limitation of the letters to exactly **seven** out of all the Churches on the earth, has led to seeing in them a complete **view of the Church as a whole,** in each period, and through all the periods of its testimony.

These letters then are not to be limited in application to the literal Churches to which they are addressed.

But a closer consideration has discovered a divine prescience and design in the **order** in which the let-

ters were both directed to be—in Chapter I, verse 11—and were actually, sent, in Chapters II and III, without any deviation whatever. But the **order** then has significance, and the seven letters at once assume a still greater importance in giving us a complete view of the Church during its whole course on earth, **in seven consecutive conditions,** which answer to those of the literal churches.

When we test this by actually considering that course, we find a correspondence between the conditions of the seven literal churches in Asia, and the seven conditions through which the Church as a whole has passed during the nineteen centuries, which is nothing less than startling; and it not only confirms our thought, but leads to question if this be not the interpretation of these two chapters **divinely intended as final.** As we meditate upon it, this disappears as a question and becomes a **certainty**. We conclude, therefore, that the seven literal churches then existent in Asia were selected as forming prophetic foreshadowings of the history of the Church as a whole.

But true as this is, does it necessarily nullify the fact of the churches being, as they undoubtedly were, historic and literal, or that in that historic sense they represent "the things that are?" I must leave my reader to answer this question; but if he admits it, then not only have we a double interpretation of the second and third chapters, but for all that follows: **first** in the events now, for the most part, matters of past history, and in these

that are now taking place before our eyes; and **secondly** in what can only take place after the testimony of the Church is finished altogether, either by the rapture of all its true witnesses to be with Christ forever, or by what will be simultaneous with that, the utter repudiation of the unfaithful mass, by being "spued out of His mouth," as is divinely foretold, Chapter III. 16. Further, these two interpretations continue in the characters of that on which they are respectively based: the first is but anticipative and shadowy; the second the final. In other words, both the historical and futurist interpretations, being mutually helpful and not antagonistic, are justified.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Book of Revelation—Its Historical Interpretation

This then clears the way for my present purpose; the consideration of present events in the light of this marvelous prophecy: nor need we allow any room for mere speculation or imagination,

But we should err no less on the other side were we to close our eyes altogether to the many correspondences—frequently very striking as they are—between the contents of the greater part of the book of Revelation, and the events that have taken place in that part of the earth which is the subject of prophecy; or refuse to take any note as to where we have arrived in that series of events.

Let me further note that God, while He cannot have ignored altogether the events in that sphere that has professed subjection to His dear Son, has yet placed very certainly the stamp of its shadowy character on this historical interpretation, for a shadow cannot always have very clearly defined outlines; and in exact accord with this, there is an indefiniteness that frequently has led to more or less divergence in the applications of these prophecies; but while this only confirms the correctness of looking at them only as anticipative and not final, yet there is quite sufficient distinctness to justify

our considering and not ignoring them altogether, as giving us the light needed to discern where we now are in this ever unwinding thread of time; and for this we are now to-day dependent on no uncertain history; we are ourselves in the sphere of well established facts, and indeed may, I believe, note the clearest correspondence of the Scripture with what is passing before our very eyes.

It is not the place, nor is it indeed either necessary or possible, to attempt a very detailed examination of the whole book, and follow, in each particular, the prophecy through its shadowy fulfillment in the history of Christendom.

Yet it would appear well to give the reader a rapid glance at the events answering to the Scriptural foreshadowings. To do this I will quote another writer than whom there has not been a more consistent upholder of the "futurist" point of view; and one who cannot be judged as biased any more than myself in favor of the "historical," whose testimony, therefore, in its favor will be correspondingly valuable. It begins indeed with an evidence of the writer's conviction as to the relative importance of the two principles:

"It is impossible to interpret the fourth and fifth chapters in any proper way according to the historical view. The vision shews us manifestly saints already in heaven, reigning, and therefore risen, seated upon thrones around the throne of God. It is utterly impossible to apply this in the historical fashion; and that most important change, by which

the Lamb slain becomes before one's eyes the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is equally impossible to be interpreted according to the full and right force of the terms used.

"The book according to the view before us must be the revelation of the Church's **earthly** history. The seals which must be removed before the book is open, might naturally have therefore such an application to the fall of the pagan empire as is usually made. It is plain that pagan Rome must fall before the book, in its main theme, can be fully opened. Thus the seals are necessarily introductory, and the common view of them is so far justified.

"In the first seal a time of conquest such as from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius actually occurred: and in this view the extension of the empire eventually helped to weaken it, and thus to prepare the way for the final catastrophe." A. D. 96 to 180.

"The second seal, in harmony with history, speaks of such civil war following as necessarily ensued from the setting up and putting down of emperors that often rose in quick succession, and by distinct claims of different pretenders." (To A.D.217.)

"The third seal speaks of famine and straitness, such as would naturally follow, of which one main one is noted, beginning with the edict of Caracalla." (To A. D. 248.)

"The fourth seal again speaks of what would be the natural result of this state of things, and is evidently a foreshadowing of the approaching end, al-

though it does not actually bring us thither." (To A. D. 303.)

"The fifth seal brings us to another side of things, and manifestly represents the hostility to Christianity more and more developing, so that the cry of the blood of the martyrs went up to heaven; and the sixth is the manifest answer to this, shewing us the convulsions in which the pagan empire ended. This reaches to Constantine (A. D. 322), although there is nothing with regard to Constantine's victory such as the plaudits of the Christian historians might lead us to expect. Rather does it introduce us to the trumpets; which, with their loud call to conflict, begin now on the Christianized empire, which begins the world-history of the Church; in which Church and world are so much identified.

"Historical interpreters plainly break down in their attempts at application of the seventh chapter, and necessarily so. The distinction manifest here between the two companies, the one Jewish, the other Gentile (and these last those that have come through the great tribulation) forbid any proper application to a time when in the Church, Jew and Gentile, as such, exist no longer, and when great tribulation is yet an event in the distant future.

"The seventh seal contemplates the book as now open. Hence it only introduces us to the trumpets, which, after a short interval of silence, begin to sound.

"According to common consent the first four trumpets show us judgments on the western, as the two following on the eastern division of the now dissolving empire. We need not deny then the application of the first to the inroads of the Goths (A. D. 400); the second to the conquest of the maritime provinces of Africa and the islands by the Vandals (A. D. 429); the third to the fierce and more quickly exhausted eruption of the Huns (A. D. 450); or of the fourth to the time of Odoacer, by whom the name and office of Roman Emperor of the West was abolished, and thus of the Roman Imperial sun, that 'third' which appertained to the western empire collapsed and shone no more. A. D. 476.)

"From this point there is almost a consensus of interpreters in referring the fifth trumpet to the Saracenic woe (A. D. 612 to A. D. 934). Similarly the sixth trumpet no doubt refers to the Turkish woe. That there are diffculties connected with this interpretation, if we are to think of it as complete and exhaustive, may be readily acknowledged; yet Barnes, in quoting from Gibbon's account, can say: 'If Mr. Gibbon had designed to describe the conquests of the Turks as a fulfillment of the prediction, could he have done it in a style more clear and graphic? If this had occurred in a Christian writer, would it not have been charged upon him that he had shaped his facts to meet his notions of the meaning of the prophecy?' Here then the Eastern empire comes to an end, and we go on from

this point to look at events of a very different character.

"The interposed visions of the tenth and eleventh chapters introduce us to Reformation times. . . The angel is still Christ, who claims, in opposition to His professed vice-regent (the Pope) sea and land for God; and this is confirmed by His own voice in the seven thunders. The open Bible is in the angel's hand, and this to communicate to others . . . thus the reformers took up again the testimony of prophets of a day long passed. . . There was also such a distinction made between true and false worshippers as the measuring of temple and altar would imply. . . . The outer court was, however, given up to the profane, for whom the established Churches of the reformation had in some way to provide: Church and nation being made, as far as profession were concerned, two aspects of the same thing. But this was only a continuance of a former state of things which under Romanism was, of course, in every way worse. . . . It is only by taking into account this earlier condition that the forty and two months can be made good in this connection; as, if they are 1260 years, they must begin long before reformation times. During this same time too the two witnesses would therefore testify, their testimony ended by the 'Lateran Council' (A. D. 1512), when the orator of the council proclaimed to the Pope from the pulpit—there is an end of resistance to the papal rule in religions (i.e., the two witnesses are slain). "However

little the truth of this language could be insisted upon, yet the ability to boast in this way argues at least the appearance of truth; and it is remarkable that three years and a half after (answering to the three and a half days of the vision) Luther posted up his theses at Wittemberg, a convulsion of the nation following, and one at least of the papal kingdoms, England, escaping from this control (i.e., one-tenth of the city fell). That this will fit all round must not be contended. There is a sufficient similitude to the truth to make us believe that these things are contemplated in the prophecy. . . . "There seems nothing in the chapters between the thirteenth and the seventeenth, which would call for attention further."

So far I quote Mr. Grant, but with this last statement we are compelled to take very decided issue. Since the writer has traced and given his modified adhesion to the correspondence between Scripture and the critical events that have taken place in Christendom down to the sixth trumpet, and to the reformation, not to carry the same principle through the "vials" would appear altogether unreasonable, nor am I able to account for Mr. Grant leaving it there. If we cannot test it by events that we can see **ourselves,** how can we by what we must receive from **others?** To come almost within sight of our own time, when we have more ability to confirm or confute correspondences that come **almost** within our own ken, and finally do so altogether, and then to stop, takes away the chief

value of the whole principle of this interpretation from us to-day. We must therefore continue very briefly to look at the vials.

It will not be necessary, however, to consider the interlude between the Trumpets and the Vials: that is the 12th to the 15th Chapters, first because our purpose is now only to trace the main line of the historical fulfillment through the threefold series of Seals, Trumpets, and Vials to our own time; and secondly, because we should have to differ seriously with historical—or as they like to speak of themselves—"Protestant" interpreters, who are pledged to see Roman Catholicism in every symbol of evil, whether it be "beast from the sea" or "beast from the land," or False Prophet, or Babylon—all these are "Rome," or "the papacy" in some aspect. The Spirit of God has not so written the Scriptures, nor will such interpretations, due to religious polemics, be of Him.

We cannot, nor do we wish to deny however that there are strong family likenesses in this whole circle of spiritual wickedness, nor that the papacy exhibits these family lineaments very strongly and in this may, and I believe does, foreshadow the last and fullest expression of religious corruption; but we need not embarrass our argument by carrying on a discussion as to this.

As, in this system of interpretation, the seventh Seal issued in, and comprehended the seven Trumpets, so the seventh Trumpet issues in and comprehends the seven Vials. But who, with any preten-

on to any soberness of thought, could say that "the mystery of God was **"finished"** at the French revolution, for it is when this Trumpet **begins** to sound that that "Mystery" is to be "finished"; yet the **finishing** trumpet may well in some sense include those vials in which the **last** plagues of the wrath of God are completed."

These points which I cull from Elliott's **"Horae Apocalypticae,"** are at least of value and interest: I: The angel of Chapter X announced that there should be "no more delay." The establishment of Christ's kingdom over the world is then drawing near at that epoch. II: that the era to be completed under the seventh sounding would be one in which the nations of apostate Christendom would manifest some remarkable outburst of the passions, whether against Christ Himself or **against each other.** III: that God's primary providential acts for the establishment of His kingdom, would be acts of judgment eminently notable against both the apostate nations, perhaps too the Euphratean invaders, i.e., Turks. (!)

The time of the vials favors their application to the terrific upheaval beginning with the French revolution. The second, woe-trumpet, or Turkish woe, may be said to have ended with the crushing defeat of the Turks in the war of 1769 to 1774. "The Turkman power was no longer a woe to Christendom, but Christendom was a woe to the Turkman."

"That woe being ended, the 3rd was to come quickly, accordingly in 1789 the French revolution broke out, with political terrors corresponding to the terror-striking signs used in the symbolical language of the Apcalypse."

Was it not a political earthquake when the States-General was convoked in its three orders—clergy, nobles, people to meet on May 5th, 1789. Then the "Third Estate"—the people—being unaccountably permitted to be doubled in number, outvoted and overthrew the other two, and became sovereign; and in so doing precipitated the political earthquake called the French Revolution.

The first Vial affected the earth, and tells of a most grievous sore that fell on all who had the mark of the beast. Let anyone who doubts any correspondence read pages 357 to 376 of Vol. III. of "Horae Apocalypticae," and he will be convinced willy-nilly of the moral, political and social ulcer that followed the upheaval of atheistic democracy at the close of the 18th century in the prophetic earth. Here the absolute sovereignty of the people was first asserted, not merely as opposed to the monarchial form of government, but as being above all **divine** authority, it was a true forerunner of the "clay." The violence that accompanied this claim was evidenced in massacres that have been reckoned by such a sober historian as Alison at upwards of 1,000,000; while the accompanying corruption may be suggested by the worship in Paris of a prostitute as the goddess of Reason.

The second vial affected the sea, as did the corresponding trumpet, and is said to find its historical interpretation in the maritime wars that followed the revolution of 1793 to 1815. "The whole history of the world does not present such a period of naval war as destruction and bloodshed—in the language of prophecy—the sea became as the blood of a dead man." No one can surely claim that this is satisfactory as an exhaustive fulfillment,nor can any one deny on the other hand that there is a certain degree of correspondence, that may serve to strengthen the whole.

The third vial tells, as did the third trumpet, of battles of terrific violence taking place on the Rhine, Danube, and the Alpine springs of water. This assumes the sphere or object of the judgment to be literal, but this is not carried out consistenly in the next. The fourth vial is poured on the sun. As in the trumpet this was taken as a symbol of the supreme imperial power, which then came to its end under the strong hand of Odoace. So similarly here: in 1806 the German emperor was compelled to renounce the title of "Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire" and of Germany. His place, however, was taken by another (Napoleon) who, in his triumphs and tyranny, "scorched men with fire." This covers from 1789 to 1809.

The fifth vial corresponds with the fifth trumpet in the "darkness" evident in both, and while it is not as prominent, it is still sufficient to maintain the correspondences between the two series of Trump-

ets and Vials without a break. At the trumpet, the Saracen hordes flood eastern Europe and their system of falsehood emanated, as all such, from "the pit of the abyss and darkened the moral atmosphere and dimmed the imperial sun in the firmament." At the fifth **vial,** the kingdom of the beast is full of darkness, due to a similar spread of error in the sphere of Christendom. From side to side the pendulum swung from superstition to infidelity, then back again to the superstition of Romanism. Nor has this darkness been dispersed, nor does it affect the truth that the grace of God has kept alive a true light that has shone through all. This historical interpretation is always more or less unsatisfactory if it be looked upon as exhaustive, but, again I say, the correspondences are too numerous to be the result of mere chance, and if of design—the Designer must be God.

We have now hurried through the centuries thus:

The six seals comprehend the first four centuries.

The seventh developes into the trumpets.

The first four trumpets go down to the end of the fifth century.

The fifth to the close of the tenth.

The sixth to the eighteenth.

The seventh developes into the vials, going to the Lord's manifestation.

The first five vials bring us to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and permits us to consider carefully the sixth, which must embrace our own day.

CHAPTER IX.

The Book of Revelation and the War (continued), The Sixth Vial.

But this sixth vial will demand rather more careful consideration: we will therefore quote each verse and comment as we go.

"And the sixth poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the waters thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

However widely historical interpreters may at times differ among themselves, there is one point where they fall into a very striking degree of agreement. The fifth trumpet has been, with practical unanimity accepted by them all as foretelling that scourge sent upon Christendom as a divine chastening, in the seventh to the tenth centuries in the Saracen invasion. While the sixth trumpet has with equal unanimity, been recognized as foretelling that other scourge in the irruption of the Turks in the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries. So practically unanimous are all students of Scripture as to these that, if the other Scriptures give further confirmation to such interpretation, they may be accepted with assur-

ance as being the divine intent, at least as far as this character of interpretation goes.

As the next step, let us again recall to mind this striking fact that the trumpets and vials correspond in the spheres they affect. That both the first trumpet and the first vial affect the earth: the second of both the sea: the third of both the rivers and fountains of waters: the fourth of both the sun: the fifth of both brings darkness on a certain sphere: and the sixth of both the river Euphrates; as to the seventh we shall see later.

This, then, would surely compel us to see the same object in the sixth **vial** as in the sixth **trumpet,** but with the great difference: at the sounding of the trumpet, the four angels that were bound at the river Euphrates are loosed, and, as we look for literal angels, we see a vast invading horde. It if as if the very river, represented by the four angels, had burst its bounds, overflowed its banks, and carried desolation wherever it came.

Here, then, the **Euphrates,** or what is represented by it, is the agency by which the judgment is inflicted, as was undeniably the case from the eleventh century onward in the **Turkish** invasion of what we recognize as the prophetic earth.

But when the vial is **poured** out, it is directly **upon** the Euphrates, and its waters are "dried up." That is beyond all question, the reverse of its flood; it is the ebb; and speaks as simply and clearly as words can speak, of the recession of the same

people as seen in the corresponding trumpet—the Turk.

But if the trumpet then applies to the eleventh and following centuries, the vial applies equally to the nineteenth and twentieth, for **this is exactly what has taken place** for nearly 100 years: **since the rebellion of Ali Pasha of Yanina in 1820.** Then began a series of disasters to Turkey that have never ceased to the present hour.

But let us either expose these as mere coincidences, or confirm them as divinely intended prophecies, by asking: "Does Scripture justify this interpretation of a river as being a figure of a people either in the flood tide of conquest or the ebb of defeat, when it is used symbolically?" Beyond all controversy it does. Isaiah VIII. 7, is a clear proof "Now therefore the Lord bringeth upon them the **waters of the river strong and many**—even the **king of Assyria."** That is, the **"river"**—and it is again the Euphrates that must be understood—here, is a figure of the King of Assyria and his hosts as coming from **that quarter, the Euphrates.**

We need to have our foot firmly fixed here. Human interpretations are fallible, but in this Scripture, the Spirit of God Himself tells us that He is using the river (Euphrates) as a symbol of "the king of Assyria, and all his glory," nor does it then seem possible to err in interpreting the same river in the same way when used in the one new Testament book of prophecy, filled as it is with prophetic

symbols which we have constantly to interpret by their earlier use in the Old Testament.

I repeat; if in the Old Testament prophecy, Israel's enemy, the agent of the infliction of divine chastenings on the unfaithful witness, Israel, the Assyrian is figured by "the waters of the river" (and it is always the Euphrates that is thus designated) since he comes from it, why in the New Testament prophecy should not the Turk, occupying exactly the same location, be figured by the same river when issuing from it in conquest as the agent of chastenings on the unfaithful witness——Christendom; or retreating in defeat when the restoration of Israel is coming into view?

But this is further confirmed by another similar use of the figure of a river or rivers.

In Chapter XVIII. 2, "the land the **rivers** have spoiled" refers, I am assured, without question to Palestine; as "the nation scattered and peeled" can only refer to its people, the Jews, for these are the people, of all the nations, that are ever in mind of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. But in no possible way can this be understood, save as referring to the tread across it of hostile armies in the flood of conquest.

The word "rivers" here **must** be used symbolically, for the land of Canaan has no literal rivers that could "spoil" it. Jordan is the only one of any account, and this was a safeguard rather than a danger. It is not necessary to specify these "rivers," or hostile invading nations, that have, beyond

all controversy, made a spoil of that land. But whether the east attacked, or the west, the fields of Palestine were trodden down; whether the king of the north or the king of the south was the aggressor—Palestine suffered. The "rivers" are most assuredly these nations in the flood of conquest, and these two Scriptures give an assurance, which I do not think it is too dogmatic to call **divine,** that we are justified in interpreting the Euphrates in both sixth trumpet and sixth vial as Turkey; at least in that historical interpretation with which I am now dealing.

Is there any other river on the face of the whole earth that would be equally appropriate? I have only seen one other alternative suggestion. One justly esteemed expositor writes: "Turkey would surely be better represented by the Nile, or by the Danube than by the Euphrates."* He gives no reason for this, and one can only say: "Surely **not,"** for the Nile is indissolubly linked with Egypt, whose very boast is, "My river is my own," while the Danube would be utterly dissociated from the Turk as the starting point of their invasion, which is exactly what the river Euphrates was; and the loosing of the angels bound there also gives the unequivocal idea of the **initiation** of the influx; the Euphrates figures the Turks to-day, as it did the Assyrians of old, because from that river they come into the light of prophecy.

*William Lincoln, "Revelation."

But now we come to the reason, in the divine plan, for this drying up of the waters of the Euphrates, or the recession of Turkey: **"that the way of the kings of† the 'rising again of the sun,'** (I translate quite literally and the importance of doing so will be seen) **might be prepared."**

I know there have ever been, and doubtless will still be, divergent views as to who are meant by these "kings"; but the first and basal point to be settled is: Are we to look upon Revelation as a book of prophetic symbols, or is it always to be taken quite literally? I cannot see how there can be two answers to this question. Altars and eagles that speak; spirits like frogs coming from the mouths of dragons, and beasts, and false prophets, and many another similar enormity, if looked at in this way, forbid our maintaining the literalness of these evident figures. So, as we have seen, the prophetic scriptures quite confirm our looking upon the river Euphrates as a figure.

But if that is clearly the case, why should not the Sun be equally a symbol? Does the fact of its being more familiar alter the principle? And do not

†Greek "apo" usually but not always rendered from. It shows the sphere or scene with which they are identified: their true origin. As the Turks took their rise at the Euphrates, and thus are so identified with it, as to be symbolically called by its name, so these shall take their rise at "the rising of the sun." Just as, too, in Acts XVII. 13, "the Jews of (apo) Thessalonica" could not possibly be rendered "from Thessalonica," for they had not left it when they are so designated. Thessalonica was their **home.** So, I judge, there is no necessity for altering the translation of the A. V.

the same prophetic Scriptures equally justify such an understanding? Malachi IV. 2 will answer this. Indeed, it is constantly used in this very way, in this book, as Chapters VIII. 12, XII. 1, etc., evidence. The translation of two Greek words, and one of them a compound, by the one English word, "east," hides this it is true, but we can make no mistake in referring to the exact words used by the Spirit of God, and these words rendered into their precise equivalent in English, read: "the rising again of the sun."*

The sun then is symbolic. But in what way is the sun a symbol? Its very first occurrence will give us the answer: It is "the greater light **to rule** the day." Here is the supreme ruler. The moon, and all attendant planets, with this little earth, are **governed by the sun.** He is the source of Light and Life to all. Could there be a more admirable figure of Him by whom all things subsist? (Col. I.

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*This exact phrase, "the rising of the sun" occurs in only one other place in the N. T., chapter VII. 2 of this book. There it is very unequivocally connected with the security and blessing of this remnant of Israel that will form the nucleus of the new nation in the millenial day. This is surely in absolute harmony with, and strongly confirmatory of the interpretation given—is any other possible?

Since writing the above, a friend has called my attention to the fact that another writer has already reached the same conclusion by quite another road. I quote from Dr. William Milligan's book on Revelation:

"The waters of the Red Sea were **dried** up, not for the overthrow of the Egyptians, but **for the safety of Israel** and the bed of the river Jordan was **dried up** for a **similar** purpose. Thus, too, the prophet Isaiah speaks:

17.) Of whom then can it possibly be a symbol but of Him who is the "Sun of Righteousness," who as King, or Supreme Ruler, is again to rise and shed his beams over this distracted scene?

But we must next ask: For whose blessing is He thus coming as Sun of Righteousness? Is it for the Church? Nay, for she will have been "caught up" to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. IV. 13-18) with all the heavenly saints, long before this, when He reached our air as the "Bright Star of the Morning." Is it for the blessing of the world and nations of the earth? Nay, not directly, although indirectly it shall so result to them, but directly He comes to **judge** the world and the nations. (Matt. XXV.)

But all Scripture, with one harmonious voice, assures us that it is for the direct blessing of that people so long so mysteriously preserved: **Israel:** The "day of vengeance" on the oppressing nations is "the year of His redeemed, 'Israel' —Is. LXIII. Then He, the King, as identifying Himself with

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'And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian Sea, and with His scorching wind shall he shake his hand over the river and shall smite it into seven streams,, and cause men to march over dry-shod. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, which shall return from Assyria, like as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.' Again: 'Art thou not it which **dried** up the sea, the waters of the great deep: that made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over,' Is. LI. 10, and similarly, ech. X. 10, 12. It is unnecessary to say more. In these kings from the sun-rising we have an emblem of the remnant of the Israel of God, as they return from all places whither they have been led captive, and as God makes the way plain before them."

them, shall make them the dominant nation, the royal nation. He shall "give thee to be most high above all nations of the earth," as Deut. XXVIII. literally reads, "a peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation": all these blessings that they failed to acquire under law shall be theirs through grace, at His coming. Then shall they be "the head and not the tail, above and not beneath." "Then shall the law go forth out of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and He shall judge among the nations."—Is. II. 3. Yea, "all peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and shall be afraid of thee."—Deut. XXVIII. 10. The Lord (the Sun) identifies Himself with them thus.

There is not a prophecy that does not tell in clear unambiguous language of the final dominance of Israel: and, apart altogether from our interpretation of this phrase, "the kings of the rising again of the sun," as a matter of simple fact, if we believe the Scriptures, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, still ever beloved for the father's sake, are to be manifested as occupying the place of kingly dominance at the return of the Lord as their Messiah, and as the Sun of righteousness for the earth. But that is nothing more than to say what this prophesy, by our interpretation of the symbols, says—can we then have misinterpreted?

I take it, then, that in harmony with these Old Testament promises, as well as with the tenor, or very atmosphere of this book, the Supreme Ruler's

—the Sun's—the King's earthly people, Israel is surely to be seen under the term, "the kings of the rising again of the sun." It is **their** way that is prepared by the drying up of the water of the Euphrates; it is for **their** return to their land that the Gentile that has his foot on Jerusalem is to be pushed back whence he came. Now make of it what you will; say, if you please, that it is but a coincidence, or a series of coincidences, yet it is an evident fact, that as **Turkey has been pushed back, so has the Jew gained a footing again in his land.** a century ago, he could uot own a foot of it, or hardly set his foot on it, save under extremely humiliating conditions: to-day there are more than double the number of Jews in Palestine than returned there from Babylon in the day of Ezra. But again let me warn that this is but a foreshadowing of the true definite fulfillment: for much sorrow has still to come to that people. They must be led again into "the valley of Achor," Hos. II., before they are truly "the kings of the rising of the Sun": their return in unbelief when it occurs will be but the historical fulfillment, and itself a kind of prophecy of the final fulfillment—their return in faith.

CHAPTER X.

The Sixth Vial—Continued

The three frog-like spirits of demons. The "Day of Almighty God."

Thus far had the thread of history been unrolled from the reel of time at the close of the Balkan war, four years ago, and thus far, and no farther could any one then speak with any assurance as to the historical fulfillment of these prophecies. But that war seemed in many respects, and from a prophetic standpoint, inconclusive. The Turk was still in Europe, indeed actually and quickly recovered some of his lost territory. The waters of this "Euphrates" were "drying"—were certainly not "dried up." Nor am I aware of any great progress made by the Jew in Palestine on account of this recession.

But that was, in a sense, only the "beginning of sorrows." Blood continued to flow almost without cessation until the present, and a far more terrific struggle broke out. Could one refrain from asking, has this no significance?" Is the word of God quite silent on so unparalleled a terror, involving more or less directly and acutely, all the nations that have assumed the place of being Christian? Did He note, clearly, inroads of Goths and Huns, irruptions of

Saracens and Turks, and is this less significant? Grant fully the need of great caution; the tendency to exaggerate present events which necessarily look larger in perspective than those afar off in the past: bear in mind the terrible "Thirty Years War" as it was termed, that desolated Europe; the wars following the French Revolution, when France, like a mountain burning with fire, set all Europe in a blaze, and when many students of prophecy saw, in the first Napoleon, the "beast" of prophecy, and erred in so doing. Grant all this, yet there are striking features in this cataclysmic convulsion, for any precedent of which we look in vain in the past —it is unprecedented and unparalleled.* We do not consider it unlikely, therefore, that it may be discerned (in that character of interpretation

*The Military Correspondent of "The London Times" writes: "All of us are probably asked a dozen times a day how long the war will last, and all of us give the best answer we can, endeavoring to preserve an appearance of solemnity, but knowing perfectly well in our hearts that our opinion on such a subject is not worth a rap.

"This war is the biggest thing in the way of wars that has ever happened to the old world since the dawn of history. It transcends all limits of thought, imagination, and reason. We little creeping creatures cannot see more than a fraction of it. Even if we climb painfully to the top of the highest ladder of thought we are still pygmies, and the war still towers high above us. We see the raging torrents at our feet, but the high summits are veiled in impenetrable mist. Try as we may to preserve a distinct and unbroken view of the scene before us, the clouds of suspicion, prejudice, ignorance, and optimism constantly obscure our vision. We look, gasp, wonder, and are dumb. We do not know. Nobody knows. This war, for once, is bigger than anybody. No one dominates it. No one even understands it. Nobody can."

with which we are now engaged, the showy and historical one) in a continuation of the **Sixth Vial.**

Let us at least recognize that this war is still connected with the river **Euphrates** and its **drying** up. In other words, no one can deny that it has grown out of the preceding Balkan war, in which Turkey was one of the prime actors and the principal sufferer. In a sense then, this is a continuation of **that,** only with other and more powerful combatants taking the place of, or, as it may eventually prove, added to those originally contending. For Turkey is again a participant, and Italy has since followed, while the war, like a whirlpool, seems destined to suck in other till all may become directly involved.* Surely the link is clear enough—it is a continuation of the sixth vial.

Then let us consider the three remaining features, or incidents of the vial; first, the mission of the three froglike spirits of demons; secondly, the parenthetical warning of the Lord's imminent return; thirdly, the gathering together to Harmaded-don.

If we are at all justified in the applications we have already made, then must there also be something current to-day, answering, **in the same shadowy way** to the three frog-like evil spirits of demons, that issue from the three united evil powers of the last days, "dragon," "beast" and "false prophet." Nor will there be difficulty, I judge, in

* The United States has since been drawn in.

seeing where these may be found in that same way, to-day.

The dragon is the Devil—of that we are quite sure from the twelfth chapter of this book; but carefully remember this, **to-day** he is not **openly exposed as a dragon,** but is posing as an "angel of light."—2 Cor. XI. 14. But that does not alter nor affect his real nature, or its purpose, which is now, as it ever was, and ever will be, the most malignant opposition to man, as the beloved creature of God; but more particularly to the only one representative Man, who has never worn his yoke, nay, who is his Conqueror, the Lord Jesus Christ.

To-day, then, we must look for the frog-like (so-called because of its moral uncleanness) **spirit** out of the mouth of the dragon, under **some fair external religious guise,** and that not connected with ignorance and superstition, but with much light, yet evidencing the most bitter antagonism to the Lord Jesus, and subtly attacking, under the very opposite profession, both His Person and His Work.

Is there the slightest difficulty in applying? Is it not only too clear? Hearken to the emanations from the pulpits and platforms of rationalistic Protestantism; to the denials of His incarnation; of His birth of a virgin; of His essential deity; of His spotless impeccable humanity; of the infinite value of His atoning Blood as the one sole unrivalled confidence and security for ruined sinful man, by which alone he is a Mercy Seat, Rom. III. 25, and God can righteously meet men in blessing and save them.

All these, in whole or in part, are openly boldly denied by various agencies, from clergymen of reputedly orthodox denominations, whose names are linked with impressive titles of reverence and dignity; to free-lances, like the late self-styled "Pastor" Russell. And these profane teachings in Protestantism will furnish all we need look for as this frog-like spirit from the mouth of the dragon; for it is essentially Satanic; under a fair religious guise, and much boasted intelligence, in accord with his posing as an angel of light.

The "beast" is the openly profane, political power. In his final form (and the shadow must conform to it), he is the revived Roman Empire seen in its head. —Rev. XIII. It is then again apparently impossible to greatly err in discerning the frog-like spirit from this source in the open defiant impiety that is already creeping into, if it does not actually characterize, the politics of the day. I am well aware that this must be carefully guarded. There are still some genuinely God-fearing rulers and magistrates for whom we may well be thankful; but who can fail to be struck with certain strongly marked features in the political arena in Europe. Take Prof. Cramb's posthumous work **"Germany and England,"** nor do I refer to it in any partisan spirit which would be quite out of place and defeat my aim, but this is what he quotes from Nietzche:

"While preparing to found a world-empire, Germany is also preparing to create a world-religion No cultured European nation since the French

Revolution has made any experiment in creative religion. The experiment which England, with her dull imagination, has recoiled from, Germany will make. The fated task which England has declined, she will essay.

"That is the faith of young Germany in 1913. The present bent of mind at the universities among the most cultured, is towards the religion of Valour," and thus it speaks:

"You have heard how in old times, it was said Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; but I say unto you, Blessed are the valiant, for they shall make earth their throne. Again it has been said, Blessed are the poor in spirit; but I say unto you, Blessed are the great in soul, for they shall enter into Valhalla. And ye have heard men say, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God; but I say unto you, Blessed are the warmakers, for they shall be called —if not the children of Jahve (Jehovah) the children of Odin, who is greater than Jahve (Jehovah!"

On the other hand, consider the ever-growing trend in politics in democratic countries. This is not simply atheistic, as denying that there is any God, but as in the French revolution, actually deifying the people **as God.** Perhaps many may not be aware of the **spirit** that is, and has been for many years accompanying the growth of the political power of the people. So fair was it in its beginning, so many were and are the worthy men identified

with it—the words of Lincoln* at Gettysburg still find hearty response, wherever democratic government has been adopted or approved, that it seems extravagant, if not impossible, justly to predicate anything vile of so worthy a cause. But listen to the extremes of this growth of democracy, the **vanguard** of those hosts of human "progress," as they esteem and advertise themselves, in the blatant infidelity of Socialism, where it is most openly avowed in the lower ranks of the body-politic; nay, see it further openly expressed in the more refined classes, in the ever-growing claim for the **deity** of the people. **"Vox populi"** is **"Vox Dei"** no longer in the sense that the voice of God might be heard **in** that of the people, whom he guided; but it is the voice of God, since the people **is** and **no other is their God.**

Let me give two illustrations of this out of many that might be found, were it necessary, or did space and time permit, in a cutting from one of our large metropolitan dailies:

JACOB H. SCHIFF'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY

When Jacob woke up from his dream,
He took a stone and vowed to build
An altar to The Most High God,
And lay upon it sacrifice.

*"A government of the people, for the people, by the people, shall never perish from the face of the earth."

Another age, another land—
Again did Jacob dream a dream
And vow an altar he would build
And bring unto it sacrifice.

This time the altar was not stone,
But was his human living heart;
His sacrifice he brought to man,
And so unto The Most High God.

This is from a Jewish pen, now for one from a Gentile:

The writer says in an article claiming that Public Opinion is the final court of appeal, "The people, whose **other name is God, will say to this man, 'Enter thou into thy reward,' and to that man, 'Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'** The day of Judgment is the **Day of the People.'** 'Who is the Son of God? **He is the people.** Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth. Kiss the Son less He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little!'" This, I admit, is but the frothy spume on the top of the wave, but it indicates the height and direction of the wave, and far from being negligible, is of weighty significance, for it expresses boldly the thoughts of the masses. It is only printed because it is recognized that it will find acceptance with the readers, and **that is its significance.**

Here then is what shall develop, in its final form, into the frog-like spirit of the demon from the

mouth of **the beast,** and indeed is that in **embryo,** or shadow, now.

As to the false prophet, since he will be a prophet, although a false one, he, too, will bear a **religious** character: and the mind inevitably turns to that great forerunner and prototype of all false prophets, "Balaam," who indeed shows us what may be looked for in the last days. He, too, was in alliance with that representative of "the beast" in his day, Balak; while, on the other hand, he was in evident association with the occult, or spirit-powers, in his seeking enchantments. Num. XXIV. 1.

But where to-day may we see a foreshadowing of this? What will be the frog-like spirit from the mouth of the false prophet **to-day?** Will it not be in the purely superstitious element in Christendom, standing, as did Balaam, as a kind of priest, between the political and the spirit-powers: closely allied on the one hand with this world's politics, yet providing the needed "religion" for that world. Is there anything in Christendom that answers so closely to this, or at least **heads it up,** although by no means confined to it, as that expression of the depths of Satan: Romanism? Ever seeking to get her hand on the politics of every country; and yet at the same time, maintaining her extravagant spiritual false claims as the only medium of salvation. The superstitions, ritualistic, formalist elements in Christendom, headed up in **Rome,** then is to-day the frog-like spirit out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Here then we may see the incipient fulfillment of this prophecy of the three frog-like demons in the three forms of evil teaching, that are leading what is called Christendom. Opposed to each other they may be, in that discord characteristic of evil; yet they are united in leading to the one common goal.

And where do they lead? "To the battle of the great day of Almighty God." "Ah," one says, "no ingenuity can make that into a present thing, that at least must be exclusively in the future."

We will avoid mere ingenuity. We will confess, and indeed contend, that its definitive and final fulfillment must be in the future; yet we shall find that the Word of God itself does not condemn, but continues, even here, to strengthen and confirm our already well established foundation, upon which we base our confidence in an anticipative, as well as a final, fulfillment of these "sayings of God."

First let us ask what Scripture teaches as to the basal idea in the word "day," when thus used in "the day of God Almighty"?

We have it in three different connections in Scripture. First we have "man's day," as 1 Cor. IV, 3 reads quite literally, although our text renders it "man's judgment," and thus giving the exact equivalent idea, affords us the answer. It is the period of man's government; the present day, in which judgment is in the hands of man. Paul esteemed it a small matter to be judged of man.

Then we have the "day **of the Lord,"** which, in exactly the same way, speaks of judgment in the hands of our **Lord Jesus,** exercised during His millenial reign. This will be the day of the Lord. Finally the "day of God" is found in II Pet. III, 12: and, while this goes on much further, yet it does not contradict, or alter, in any way, the truth already taught by the others. It speaks of that eternal day, following the Millenium, introduced by another violent cataclysm, but to be followed by endless peace, when "God shall be all in all." 1 Col. XV, 28.

Thus, if by certain clear scriptural marks, God's judgment on the nations is to be discovered in a very striking way, in the present war, then are we compelled to see in it an **anticipative** fulfillment at least of this prophecy, and in this sense "the day (or judgment) of God Almighty." Look then at the peculiar, unprecedented features of the conflict in Europe:

1. The numbers of the armies engaged cannot be fewer than thirty millions. This is without precedent.

2. The battles are such as have never been fought in the history of the world, lasting not for days, but for months.

3. The only result of the fighting hitherto has been in the sacrifice of myriads of human lives, with no decisive result, as yet, on either side.

4. Never before were such contributions to the service of death made by human ingenuity and science.

5. The widespread character of the desolation among, and more or less **upon all nations that bear the name of Christ.**

6. In its being waged not under, but in the heavens above, on the earth beneath, and not upon, but **in** the waters under the earth.

7. Above all in the striking feature of those who should by ties of blood, of kinship, and of a common faith be united, being opposed to one another. In days past Jewish armies have fought against heathen; or so-called Christian against Mohammedan, or Catholic against Protestant; but now and here we see Slav against Slav, Catholic against Catholic, Protestant against Protestant, Jew against Jew, Mohammedan against Mohammedan, and, worst of all, true children of God, fellow members of Christ, fighting with carnal weapons against one another. What is this but "every man's sword against his fellow"? * * * **But that is the very mark of God's Hand, God's judgment, God's "day"** being upon all thus rendered insensate, to their mutual destruction. Thus was it in the "day of God" on the Midianites in Judges VII, 22. "And the three hundred blew and the Lord set **every man's sword against his fellow";** thus was it in "the day of God" on the Philistines in 1 Sam. XIV, 20: "Behold **every man's sword was against his fellow and there was a great discomfiture"** and thus shall it be in the day of God on Gog, Ezek. XXXVIII, 21, **"every man's sword shall be against his brother."**

Surely he is nothing less than blind who does not see God's judgment on all the nations of Christendom, in this present war—it is surely, and in this sense, "the battle of **the Day of Almighty God"**; an anticipative foreshadowing of the final scene.

Further, is it unlikely—is it incredible—is it not probable—nay, is it not **sure,** that that judgment is the result of the Satanic, Christ-dishonoring doctrines in the three forms we have considered, and which have been prevailing in that same sphere of Christendom!

I venture to press this earnestly. Is God—consuming fire as He is in His holiness—absolutely indifferent to the treatment of His well-beloved Son? Could anything awaken His anger as any form of indifference towards His dear Son? How much more then anything partaking of an attack, or a slur on His Person or Work? What is **the** sin for which there remains only a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries?" Is it—as one would suppose from the popular teaching of the day —drunkenness, or sabbath breaking? Not at all, but just what seems of comparatively small account in that same teaching: the **"treading underfoot the Son of God, the counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing; the doing despite to the Spirit of grace."** (Heb. x, 29.)

As simply **between the nations** it may not be difficult to fix the crime of initiating the war, and of carrying it on with barbaric brutality infinitely in-

tensified by the constant endeavor to identify these horrors with the one true God; but, as **before God alone,** there is a **common,** and even a far greater guilt—unrecognized, unconfessed, unrepented of—but shared by all the nations, and no pictorial sign-language could express its three-fold sphere more clearly than these three frog-like spirits of demons. Can it be considered strange that the divine judgment on the nations of Christendom should follow? Or, in other words, that these demon spirits should lead to the "day of God Almighty."

It is these that have "gathered" the nations to the "Day." For this is the very purpose and essence of **Revelation,** not simply to record or foretell events but to **"reveal"** the hidden causes for those events: the unseen spiritual factors that have been at work to pro luce them.

CHAPTER XI.

The Book of Revelation: the Sixth Vial Continued: Harmaggedon—What or where is it?

This leads us to consider what has been called—and almost universally called—"The Battle of Armageddon." We shall be of one mind that in the interpretation of this prophecy, we cannot adhere with too punctilious exactitude to its very wording; for even a word misused may possibly throw us off the track altogether. But then at once we ask where do we get any such phrase in the Scripture as "The **Battle** of Armegeddon"? It is quite true that the evil teaching of the three frog-like demoniacal spirits gathers the "kings of the whole world to the battle of the great day of God Almighty," and that they are gathered to the place named "Harmageddon"; but that, natural deduction as it may appear, may not justify our speaking in a way that Scripture does not speak, of "The Battle of Armageddon," for in so doing we may lose, and I believe have lost, the very key that divine mercy would put into our hands. What is linked with "Harmageddon" by the Spirit of God is primarily not a battle, but the centre to which the evil spirits **gather** those under their influence. Just as in the opposite

phrase "gathered to my name" (Matt. XVIII. 20), the truth lies in what is expressed by the blessed Name of Jesus so meeting the need of all those that put their confidence in Him as to **attract** them —**gather** them—as to a common centre. No one is truly "gathered" to His Name who does not in some measure, realize his need, and that "Jesus" meets that need fully. The Lord Jesus is thus the attractive centre of such "gathering" and the Holy Spirit is alone the Gatherer. Exactly so—although in an absolutely contrary sense here are attracted—**gathered** "the kings of the whole world": Some common principles gather together these kings. Kings! Kings! But where then is He, the world's true King? Ah, these, whether we take them as literal kings or not, are already "reigning as kings without Him" (1 Cor. IV. 8). These do not await "the rising of the Sun" before they become kings. They are not then to be identified with those "kings" of verse 12, but carefully distinguished from them. **Those** picture Israel, only brought to the head of the nations when He comes; **these** are the Gentiles who are reigning **now.** Well then may they be gathered by the three evil spirits to the one centre—it is "Harmageddon"; here is something that attracts them, they gravitate here; for, in a sense, it is their "own place," and all go to their own place sooner or later.

Thus, as the gathering to the blessed Name of Jesus reveals the "gathered" as those who keep the word of His patience and do not deny His Name, so

Harmageddon reveals the people gathered there—the place so corresponds with the people, that in learning the significance of the gathering place, we shall learn the character of the gathered, and get what the Spirit of God purposed to give us.

This is but a return, as so much in this last book of the Bible is, to the first book: Genesis. There, too, we often question whether the people give the name to the place, or the place to the people: for instance, the word for Egypt is Mizraim—that is, the name of the country all through the Scriptures. But we read "The sons of Ham, Cush and **Mizraim,"** etc. Here then is a **man** named Mizraim, and a **country** also thus named. Did the man give his name to the country, or derive his name from the country? At first sight, we say the former, for the man is first mentioned; but when we see how remarkably the word "Mizraim" describes the one characteristic of the country, we begin at least to question if this may not have been given first and then the same characteristic being evidenced in the man that made it his home, he is given the same name. For Mizraim means "double straitness," that is, "shut in on both sides," exactly as Egypt (and I quote here from another) is a narrow strip of country on each side of the great river that flows through it, and to which alone it owes its existence. For the desert on both sides hems it in, blowing in its sands from both directions, over which the river in its yearly overflow, deposits its burden of earth and renews the soil. Thus a perpetual con-

flict goes on in the world between life and death. If for one year the river but partially fail, the land is in distress. And such is the world, in which the stream of God's mercies, in its uninterrupted flow, maintains what would otherwise be impossible existence. Yet although thus dependent, the world sees not, as Egypt sees not, on what it really depends. It is the river itself that is their all, and they can even impute to themselves what is the gift of God: "my river is mine own and I have made it."*

Thus the same word Mizraim tells out, with equal truth, both the country and the man, who in this one aspect, expressed by this name, represents the race as a whole: both the country and the man are "shut in on both sides" by a desert called among men "death": both are "Mizraim."

This adds its confirmation to the conviction that the word Harmageddon is intended to give us the character of those gathered, and we must consider it further. The present conflict in Europe did not come without such clear warning as that every intelligent man foresaw it as inevitable sooner or later. Armies were not raised, equipped, and the steadily increasing burden of their maintenance laid on the shoulders of the people in almost unbearable taxation, merely for the sake of "reviews" and "manoeuvres." Cannon were not cost salutes, nor were 16,000,000 men permanently withdrawn from peaceful pursuits for any other purpose than either for aggression, or the resistance of aggression;

*From Numerical Bible by F. W. Grant.

and ever, as men spoke of that coming inevitable world-war, so terrific was it foreseen that it must be, that they called it "Armageddon," for that was a name that their Bibles provided in foretelling some awful final conflict.

So, after the storm had burst, the same word was ever applied, as if Christendom instinctively appropriated a term already and divinely provided for it; and newspapers, magazines, platforms and pulpits—every expression of intelligence, every medium of the communication of intelligence, all have united in calling it "Armageddon"; this was, and is, the measure and expression of Christendom's intelligence as to this unparalleled conflict.

It is quite true that there has been a strong protest against this by a comparatively few students of Scripture, who are better instructed, and who point out that the last great conflict will not be between nations in discord, but between apostate nations in evil accord, whether against the Lord of lords and King of kings Himself, or (as I have no question it will be at first) against Him as identified with the Jewish remnant of faith in Jerusalem, as specifically foretold by the prophet Zecheriah (Chap XIV.); nor can there be any doubt as to the correctness of this latter view of the minority. But when it denies or overlooks any significance in the former—that is, in all Christendom calling it "Armageddon"—it may be questioned whether it does not go altogether too far, and really obliterate, as far as **we** are concerned, that divinely-intended warning, "Be-

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hold I come as a thief, etc."; and if it does, it is in itself seriously defective, and lacking in intelligence, notwithstanding all its claims to superiority in this respect. Nay, more, it is positively pernicious, for it robs this warning word of our Lord as to the imminence of His return, of all its direct and specific reference to our very selves, this very day, leaving only such a general application as blunts its point greatly.

But now for one step further. Let me ask, is it, or is it not, God's way to **meet men where they are?** —to come down to the level of their own intelligence; and meeting them there, on that intelligence (which may really be the lack of it) plead with them and graciously use it as the basis of warning, or as a stepping-stone to something more?

As an illustration that occurs to me as I write, take the Lord's dealings with Nicodemus, who begins, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." This was the measure of his intelligence up to that time. It was so defective, and came so far short of the truth, as to be strictly speaking erroneous; but the Lord meets him there, by saying, as it were, "Am I such a teacher? Hast thou that measure of intelligence? Then I will teach thee; for from thine own mouth, by thine own confession, defective as it is, thou art pledged to listen: Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This is a principle in the ways of God with men; He always meets them where they are. In-

numerable other illustrations might be given; a poor sinful woman comes to draw water. He does not talk to her about being "born again," but meets her just where her own present need is, and tells her of "living water." Let a man take the place of being a servant, and at once the responsibility of that place is upon him, and his conduct will evidence the truth or falsity of the assumption; but whether true or false, God meets him on the ground that he assumes, calls him a servant even when false and wicked (Matt. XXV. 26) and holds him to conduct in harmony with his profession. For so it is written, "I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean in itself; but **to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean it is unclean."** Although not really unclean in itself, it is so to him that esteems it so; so, **although this war is not really Harmageddon in itself, it is so to all Christendom which esteems it to be so,** and it is because it is, in this limited and feeble sense, Harmageddon, that the Lord's word, **"Behold I come as a thief"** becomes of such intense value and significance to us, for it suggests that whenever men speak of Harmageddon as being present, **then must the very near coming of the Lord be looked for.** Out of their own mouths does their own warning come, and that is surely in accord with the ways of God.

Strikingly in accord with this is the fact that all historical interpreters have as we have seen traced, with more or less agreement, the correspondences

between the terms of the prophecy and the events of history through seals, trumpets, and vials till they come to the earlier part of the sixth vial; and then all has been uncertain with them. And why? Because all was, when they wrote, still future.

But we simply take up the interpretation where they were compelled to leave off, and in the portentous events that have since occurred, and are still occurring, we see the very end of the sixth vial and "Ar" (or more correctly) "Har-Mageddon"; always, be it understood, only as a foreshadowing of the final definitive fulfillment to be accomplished only at the revelation of the Lord.

But it has been thought by many quite enough to destroy this interpretation altogether to say: "Harmageddon is not in Belgium." Surely not; nor is that contended for a moment. But, and mark it well, **neither is it anywhere else on earth.***

But that gives the key; or rather it begins to make use of the key already given. In every treatise that I have read on this deeply interesting theme (and they have not been few) I have yet to see the first that does not, in some way or other, endeavor to find the literal, geographical position of this Harmageddon, and all, without exception, identifying it with Megiddo, ignore, as if of no value, the exact form of the word that is used, although,

*Nor in this do we forget the literal Megiddo, nor fail to make full use of it in the interpretation of the N T. word, as we shall see.

and in spite of our being expressly told what it is "called in the Hebrew tongue." Why are we told **that,** if it has no significance? Why are we told that in this book of signs, if it be not a sign? I confess that the more I ponder it, the more the conviction deepens that the Holy Spirit intended that these few words should give the key to the interpretation of the verse, and the more I marvel that we have not seen it long ago.

But not only have we ignored it, it is positively swept aside, and instead of seeking the force of the word "in the Hebrew tongue," commentators have quietly dropped a part of that word altogether, and assuming that this made no difference whatever, gravely tell us where "**Megiddo"** is, or rather was!

This book of Revelation is one of most profound spiritual significance—all is "sign-ified," by symbol, picture or figure. We are not dealing with merely geographical places as is admittedly the case in the Old Testament: this is "REVELATION" and in it the hidden spirit-forces that affect the motives of men, for good or evil—those that are behind the external literal places and persons—are revealed, and to be discerned. Surely that commends itself.

We conclude then that all lies in the meaning of the word in the Hebrew tongue—what then is that meaning?

The first syllable is very clear and simple when written, as all editors without exception conclude: Har.

This* is the ordinary word in Hebrew for "mountain," so that the whole word, thus turning the first syllable into English, would read "The Mountain of Megiddo." Contrast this with what in every place characterizes the literal Megiddo in the Old Testament. Deborah sang—"then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the **waters** of Megiddo." (Judges V. 19.) "The **waters** of Megiddo" do not surely give an idea of a lofty place, but rather the reverse: waters run in the valleys, not on mountain-tops. Nor is the one place mentioned in this passage: Taanach, other than in complete conformity with this; for Taanach is the second person, singular, future tense of the verb "to humble," with the suffixed personal pronoun "thee"; and, in full, clearly means **"she shall humble thee."** A bad place for the enemy, the "kings" of the land, to choose as a battle-ground, ominous and prophetic as it is, of Deborah's part in their defeat. But note the idea of depression or lowliness also in this very word, strengthening the same truth given by the word "waters."

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*In 1611, the date of the Authorized version, the then available text justified the reading "Ar," but since that day, the field of examination of ancient manuscripts and versions has been immensely enlarged, with the result that all without exception, change the accent from'to', this latter compelling the aspirate "h" which the former forbids. This almost imperceptible difference will both evidence the microscopic care with which these devoted Christians have worked, and at the same time, giving us the right meaning of the word, lead us to a correct solution of the whole difficulty.

The next occurrence: 2 Chronicles XXXV. 22: "Josiah . . . came to fight in the **valley** of Megiddo." All we need to note here again just now is the strong contrast with "**Har**" or the **mountain** of Megiddo. The literal Megiddo is a **valley,** not a mountain, and for this reason, the literal Megiddo of the Old Testament is not intended at all in our book of Revelation, save as these references may serve to throw their light on the spiritual significance of Hebrew word.

The third and last occurrence to which we need refer is in Zech. XII. 2, and is of such peculiar interest, and bears so directly on our inquiry, that I quote it in full:

"And it shall come to pass in that day I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddon."

First we have seen that wherever the literal Megiddo is mentioned, its position is always marked as here, as being in a **low** place, therefore this literal Megiddo cannot be Har-Mageddon or the **Mountain** of Mageddon.

Next, we shall, if I mistake not, find the needed light on the New Testament prophecy in this prophecy of the Old Testament: Zechariah. What was that "mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddo," that is to be a standard for a mourning still in the future? It was the poignant grief of Israel at the death of their last pious king. "Hadadrimmon,"—meaning "the pomegranate cut down"—is but a poetical name for Josiah, and is a tender and affectionate way of speaking of their slain king, so prematurely cut off. As when "devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." In neither case was it merely natural sorrow for the loss of a good sovereign, or a dear friend—that would be natural for subjects or for friends, whether devout or not; but these mourners in both cases, had Israel's interests at heart, and Israel's present hopes of immediate return of her Messiah were buried in the first martyr's grave. After that, the mercy so long lingering over Israel departs; and with the call of Saul of Tarsus, goes out to the Gentiles with the heavenly truths of The Church. Exactly so in the case of Josiah; in that grave, Israel's present hopes lay buried; for, after that, judgment came apace, never a pious king stayed it—well might they mourn.

So filled with significance is this mourning that it became the very inspiration of one of the books of the Bible, "Lamentations." **"And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing men and singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations unto**

this day," and these words "unto this day," themselves give a permanent significance to any event with which they are connected.

They do so here; for turn again to Zech. XII., where this very mourning is to be resumed as it were, and by the same pious remnant of Israel (although of course composed of different individuals) by whom it was begun so long before. Jehovah will at that time, be seeking to "destroy the nations that come against Jerusalem," and the return of His favor to His ancient people is told out in the "spirit of grace and supplication" that is then poured upon them. It is the gracious grief—the bitter-sweet of penitence: the repentance not to be repented of. Is not the "valley," and the valley only, in perfect harmony with such a spirit? If one desired to picture lowly penitence topographically, would one select a mountain or a valley? Does the valley not accord with and complete the picture?

But this throws its clear beam of light on the **Har,** the **"mountain"** of Mageddon. For as surely as the "valley" speaks of the lowliness of penitence, the **Har** or "mountain" when used as a "sign" speaks of the lofty pride of impenitence. Does not then "the Hebrew tongue" give a worthy interpretation to Har-Mageddon? Need we seek about for some non-existent geographical location, when such a truth appeals to us? Surely if we do, we turn our back on light rather than welcome it.

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*Chron. 35:23. See Lamentations Chap. 14:20.

In this contrast is the whole significance, for the word "Mageddon" means "the gathering together in troops" of those who naturally gravitate to the one place or the other: "valley" or "mountain," according to the governing principle within them, whether of penitence or of pride. The root is first seen in the name Leah gives to Zilpah's son, saying "a troop (Heb. Gad) cometh, and she called his name Gad." And it is found again in Micah V., "gather thyself into troops, O daughter of troops."[1] Thus we really have the root of that part of the word in the same verse in Rev. 16:16, which we might paraphrase thus: "and they were naturally **gathered together,** in accord with the spirits that controlled them, to a centre that showed their condition, for in the English tongue it is the **gathering together in troops of the impenitent and proud."**

Thus, in the final definitive fulfillment of this New Testament prophecy there shall be, at the revelation of Jesus our Lord, two gatherings of opposite moral characters; one, of the penitent remnant of Israel taking up again the mourning of their fathers at the setting of Israel's sun in Josiah: a mourning echoed by the same pious remnant when the hope of the immediate return of their Sun in their Messiah was lost in Stephen's death; but now finding that "Sun" in Him Whom they had pierced.

[1]Hebrew: Tith**gohd**di bath-**g'dood.**

But there shall be another gathering together of all nations against that remnant in Jerusalem[1]—a gathering of proud impenitent Satan-led nations utterly indifferent to their awful sin of complete apostasy from that same Lord Jesus, whom indeed they are defying. Will not those Jews to whom the Hebrew tongue will then again be familiar (and indeed it is already becoming familiar to those now in Palestine as their vernacular), learn much from the word Har-Mageddon in that day? May we not learn **something** now?

For this is **shadowed** to-day. Shadowed mark: with that indistinctness of outline that characterizes a shadow, so that we may not mistake it for the substance; yet it **is** shadowed, and that even in the confession of the very nations involved, who confess their own moral conditions, impenitence and pride, in calling it, as all do, "Armageddon!" To Christendom this is Harmageddon; and it is because it is that, that the Lord's parenthetical word becomes of such intense suggestiveness to us: "Behold I come as a thief," for as He is manifested in glory to the earth at the final Har Mageddon, that revelation may well have **its** foreshadowing in the coming to the air at this shadowy Har Mageddon!

[1] Zech. xiv. 1.

CHAPTER XII

Revelation—the Sixth Vial—Continued.

The Lord's coming as a thief; its relation to us; a summing up of this vial.

Let us now return to the 15th verse: parantheticaly interweaving, interlacing, dovetailing on the one hand with the three-fold apostate teaching, so clearly existent now; and on the other, with this universally called "Armageddon" is the Lord's own word:

"Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, that he may not walk naked, and they see his shame."

"Behold": a word always used to draw careful attention to the context as being of peculiar importance.

"I come as a thief." A strange simile for the Lord's coming! let us see its other occurrences. In the Lord's prophetic discourse on Olivet, He warned His disciples to watch; for, said He, "If the goodman of the house had known in what watch **the thief would come** he would have watched."

This comprehensive prophetic discourse cannot possibly be correctly understood without throwing oneself back into the time of its utterance, the persons addressed, and the questions that induced it. My space will not permit anything like an exposi-

tion; but the three questions that the Lord is answering must be borne in mind:

1. When shall these things (the utter destruction of the temple) be?

2. What shall be the sign of thy coming? that is, to reign over the earth, for the questioners knew of no other coming.

3. What shall be the sign of the end of the age? that is, the only age that could possibly be in their minds—the age of Israel under law.

Sufficient for our present purpose is it to note that there cannot have been in these questions the slightest reference to the rapture to the air which was only revealed to one who was not there,* many years later, and that therefore the coming "as a thief" must refer to the **revelation** of the Lord in manifest glory: this would be as sudden and unexpected as a thief coming on a sleeping householder.

Again, turning to 1 Thess. V. 1: But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you; for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh **as a thief in the night;** for when they shall say, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you **as a thief**. Ye are all the children of the light and children of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness."

*Thes. 4:15.

quences to that professing witness is to be excluded altogether.

For the "Coming," while it is but one—that is, there are not two comings—is not without pause in its course. When the Lord reaches our air, no law of gravity can then hinder all His redeemed even though they may have been dead many thousand years, from rising to meet Him there. Then there is a pause in that triumphant return, during which there is a war in heaven, resulting in the expulsion of Satan therefrom, Rev. XII., and every saved one is manifested before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. V.), while on earth, wickedness, with no hindrance from the Holy Spirit (for He has gone with His people whom He indwelt) heads up to its climax there, and the cup of its iniquity is rapidly filled—He that has so long hindered has gone out of the way. 2 Thes. II.

Can Christendom be unaffected by such an event? Can it possibly go on as if nothing had happened? Will it be no loss that "the Hinderer" to the full development of evil has gone? (2 Thess. II.) Surely that must mean a very serious loss, and has it not been effected as by "a thief in the night"?

Christendom shall thus awaken to find that its most valuable asset has been taken away. Like her prototype—Enoch of old—the true Church is "not found": she "is not for God has taken her."

For Enoch was also, one may say, the precious asset of the earth in that day. The judgment of the flood could not come till he was gone "out of

the way." The people of that day, too, apparently missed him, and searched for him, as they did for the one other one that was similarly translated (2 Kings II. 16) but he "was not found." Might not the men of that day have justly said, "Some one has come as a thief, and has taken away our most valuable asset." So on the day after the "rapture," may they not also justly say: "Some one has come as a thief?" I willingly admit that the prime idea in this figure of the coming as a thief must lie in its being both unexpected and unwelcome; but why should that necessitate the eliminating it **altogether** from the Lord's coming to the air? Will this not be as unexpected and unwelcome to the false profession as it is hoped and longed for by the true?

Surely, most surely, one unequivocal simple prophecy still awaits fulfillment: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we forever be with the Lord." That moment has not yet come—that shout has not yet been heard, but beyond preadventure, as surely as we can see "the day approaching," so surely is that which must precede it also approaching, and must be so much nearer as the Lord's reaching the air must precede His arrival on the earth; involving at least **seven,** and for all we know a much greater number of years than that. So that when the Lord says "I

come as a thief," He includes in that coming the first stage of it when he catches up to Himself all who are His.

"Blessed is he that watches"; that is, he to-day is the blessed one and he is the only blessed one who is not spiritually heavy, dull, indifferent to the word of prophecy; but is all alive to the significance of the hour: who is not occupied with the accumulation of wealth: is not a Lot-like dweller in the modern Sodom, but is in an attitude ready to depart at any moment—he, and not the multi-millionaire, so greatly envied as he is—is in the light of God, the blessed man: the man clogged with earth's wealth is, in the light, miserable for he will leave it all. But there is another condition for blessing; "and **keepeth his garments that he may not walk** naked and they see his shame."

The one main question here is, What are the "garments" that must be kept? The advocate for the uniform literal interpretation of the book will hardly attempt to maintain strict consistency here. The literal garments with which we clothe our bodies are needed to permit our standing without embarassment in the presence of our fellow men. For a strange sense of disorder came in with man's fall called shame: the link with God being broken, while he still retained those divine gifts that are without repentance, and was able to discern, to know, to reason, yet, his spirit being dethroned, he became by those very gifts conscious of an utter

moral disorder in his physical being, that demanded covering.

All this is but a picture of the deeper truth that we have infinitely greater need of garments that shall permit our standing, in perfect peace, in the presence of God. Evidently those to whom the Lord speaks have, or assume to have, these garments; or there would be no point in warning them to keep them. What then are they?

When our poor first parents were in the miserable condition described above, covered only with shame, and shrinking even from each other's sight, God, for the great love wherewith He loved them, Himself clothed them with skins, that required no labor of their hands, but to provide which, an innocent victim had to die: this will, I apprehend, give us the answer—those skins and these garments tell the same truth.

Every penitent believer in Christ is clothed in what makes him "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. I.). It is the "best robe" that the Father's House can provide (Luke XV.). Clothed in this, and in this alone, can he feel perfectly at home and at ease there.

These garments are certainly not our own legal righteousness, which are but "filthy rags"; nor even those white robes which are "the righteousnesses of the saints" (Rev. XX. 8) speaking of what God works in His people, for even these need to be washed in the Blood of the Lamb (Rev. XXII. 14 R. V.); but they speak of all the varied beauties of

Christ Himself; in Whom, as having died for us, and risen again, we are taken into closest favor—Christ, and He alone, is all our beauty, all our honor, all our fitness to appear before God.

"Blessed" then is he who is still content to be hidden altogether, whose boast is in Christ, and in Christ alone.

But the warning predicates the danger; and the danger comes from those three demon-spirits who are united, as we have seen, in opposition to Christ, whether it be in the teachings of apostate Protestantism; or of the man-exalting civil powers or of blasphemous superstition—all displace Christ and would thus rob the Lord's people of their "garments."

But now note, if there be a double fulfillment—both a historical and a prophetic—both of the letters to the churches, and of the later portions of the book, then it follows that the prophetic interpretation of the letters must, as already noted, have run along concurrently with the historical of chapters VI. to XVI. It is true that the prophetic interpretation of the seven letters deals exclusively with the **ecclesiastical,** while the historical interpretation of the subsequent chapters goes into the **civil** sphere, yet one would expect, at times, notwithstanding these very different spheres, that we should be able to discern some points of contact.

In both, to-day, we are very near the end—we are in Laodicea in the one case, and in the sixth vial in the other, and the anti-Christian conditions

among the so-called Christian nations must be paralleled by similar conditions in the professing Church. Then turn to the letter to the last Church, the very name of which speaks of the same triumph of **democracy,** that we have seen foretold, and accomplished in the nations, paralleled in the Church: for Laodicea means "the people's rights" or "the judgment of the people," which is surely akin to the government of the people, by the people." But further, what is the condition of this "Church"? It has **lost** its "garments," for it is "naked," and the counsel is to buy white raiment before it is too late. Thus both the name and the counsel indicate a correspondence in the times.

These parallels are not alone, there are others, but they suffice to confirm the double application of this book.

Now one of the most striking characteristics of the religious world to-day is the minimizing of Christ: His Person, His Work—till He becomes of no account whatever. Have you not seen those letters, written from the trenches, by young men of most admirable natural character, who, in the day of peace gave up their lives to settlement work, and the bettering the conditions of their fellow-men, and in the day of war, laid down those lives. May I specify that fine young British soldier Donald Hankey; we may and will hope that the faith of the heart was better than the confession of the lip, but find in his letters one line of confession of the need of the Cross—one breath of appreciation of the

atoning death of the love unto death of the Lord Jesus as His Saviour. It is, alas, and we may well speak of it "even weeping," conspicuous by its absence: the "garments" are not there. So striking is this that letters breathing exactly the same nobility of natural character from a young Jew named Samuels, have also been published, and the comment of a "Christian" clergyman is, "See how this war has obliterated the differences of creeds." What can that mean, but that it makes no difference whatever whether you believe in Christ or not. He is negligible.

With such attractive a setting is this presented that not only young Christians, but all who are not very watchful, are in great danger of being carried away and losing their "garments."

To sum up: this sixth vial then affects "the river Euphrates" or in the historical application, Turkey, for God's ways with scattered Israel are coming to a head, and this necessitates dealing with the Gentile Power that has its foot on Jerusalem. The result of this judgment is that the empire of Turkey recedes as a river dries up, and ever the divine purpose is the return of the Jew to his land so long held by the Turk.

Connected closely with this recession of the Turk, is a three-fold anti-Christian propaganda going (a) through apostate Protestantism, out of the mouth of the dragon, (b) the "Christian" nations as a political agglomeration, out of the mouth of the beast and (c) the sphere governed by super-

stition, out of the mouth of the false prophet. In every sphere the aim of the demoniacal spirits is the setting aside the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ, and exalting the first man. That exaltation naturally and inevitably leads to the judgment of God that ever falls on creature-pride, and that gathering centre is called, when translated from the "Hebrew tongue," "the gathering centre of the children of pride."

All this is the historical foreshadowing of a final and future fulfillment.

But all this too is of a significance that it is impossible to over-estimate.

For grant these two provisos: First, that the Bible is a divine revelation to mankind; and secondly that there is some sober basis for the application of the Apocalypse to the Lord's dealings with what is called Christendom, then it follows: 1. That whenever the Ottoman empire is being dried up, the return of the Lord Jesus is drawing near, and that has been the case for a hundred years.. 2. Whenever there are clear evidences of the Jews getting ready to return to their land, the return of the Lord Jesus is drawing near—and that has been the case for fifty years. 3. Whenever we can discern three distinct lines of teaching; all leading to apostacy from Christ, the return of the Lord Jesus is very near. 4. Whenever the nations calling themselves Christian are engaged in a conflict they call Armageddon the return of the Lord Jesus is drawing very, very near—and that has been for

the last **three** years. Yet I do not say that His coming during the present war is divinely certain: that would be to go beyond Scripture. I only say that there is quite sufficient **probability** of it to quicken hope, to arouse our dormant consciences, and to pass on the cry, "Awake, awake, behold the bridegroom cometh."

The next event **noted** is figured by the pouring out of the seventh vial—what sphere does that affect? What does it effect in that sphere? These are the only questions that now remain.

CHAPTER XIII

The Book of Revelation—The Seventh Vial.

This then brings us to the very end of the sixth vial, the historical shadowy fulfillment of which has progressed up to the present war, and as far as one can see there is nothing beyond it—it is the last event that is **noted** in the "vial." To say more than this—to speak with greater certainty would go beyond dependence on Scripture, and assume the role of a prophet.

Thus, one cannot say, with dogmatic assurance, that some form of peace may not be arranged between the combatants, that there may not be another trial of mankind under a universal, unmixed Democracy; but even if it were, it could only be a pause—a temporary and armed truce—with no guarantee against its renewal at a more favorable opportunity and, if possible, with still greater fury, and still therefore a continuation of what is called "Armageddon."

I do not think that I shall appeal in vain to those of my readers, to whom the Scriptures are somewhat familiar, when I ask them to note the significance of this phenomenon: the earnest efforts of

the diplomacy of the world, first to maintain peace, and now, when this is broken, to restore it.

Our President sent a note to all the belligerents begging them to state clearly the objects for which they were continuing to fight, and to give expression to the terms on which they would be content to make peace. It met with no sincerely favorable response from any single combatant. Now this in itself is suggestive of a fundamental principle in the ways of God: the helplessness of the creature must first be evidenced, before he intervenes. Not till men were evidenced as "without strength," did Christ die "for the ungodly"—that, and that alone, was the "due time." So at the marriage in Canaan not till the confession was forced "they have no wine" could the Lord interpose and give the "best." The saying is surely true, "man's extremity alone provides "God's opportunity." So do we not see human impotency to bring peace being more and more evidenced; human diplomacy made more and more to feel its utter helplessness. This at least does not militate against the intervention of God at such a time, rather is it a reasonable basis for looking for such intervention.

For indeed as I write, peace seems as far away as ever. Passions were never so stirred, animosities never so intensified, and a strange providence, first apparently favoring one and then the other of the belligerents, has maintained that "balance of power" that diplomacy esteemed to be the very safeguard for the maintenance of peace. Out of

that diplomacy, God has been, and still is altogether excluded; and it is strikingly in line with His governmental ways to turn such diplomacy to its own defeat. "Go to," they cried, in the day of Gen. XI., "let us build a city and a tower lest we be scattered." It was man's diplomacy, but that very city and tower was the very cause of their scattering. Pharaoh, in his day, thought it to be good "diplomacy," and would keep Israel in bondage, if he cast every male child into the Nile; but that very "diplomacy" resulted in putting Moses into his court, and the deliverance of Israel. (Exodus I.) Peace by the "balance of power" has been the policy of modern statesmanship, and now that very balance of power clearly forbids peace. How often has one advantage gained by one side been at once offset by a counter advantage gained by the other, while each has been, in its turn, providentially protected from a disaster that would have gone far towards a decision—God seems now to be again causing man's "diplomacy," independent of Him as it is, to defeat its object and to be preventing peace that it was intended to maintain.*

Thus with peace necessary, if Europe, that we say not the world, is not to become a blood-soaked

*Since this was written a most striking evidence of its truth has occurred. The United States have thrown themselves on the side of the Western Allies. How many thought "that settles the matter." But almost at the same moment, Russia, shaken by internal convulsions, pauses in her military activity, practically for the time being becomes a nullity—thus maintaining the "Balance of Power," at least for a time.

desert, and yet with no means yet found for attaining it, are we not getting (at this ending of the sixth vial) to that necessary sense of impotence that must immediately precede divine intervention. Is then that intervention improbable from **that** point of view?

"And the seventh angel poured his vial upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne saying, 'It is done'."

The "air" then is the object of this seventh vial. But what then becomes of that correspondence between trumpets and vials that has been so clear and so significant as to afford us great help in the interpretation of the latter?

Thus the first trumpet affected the "earth," so the first vial; the second trumpet affected the "sea," so the second vial; the third trumpet affected the fountains and waters, so the third vial; the fourth trumpet affected the "sun," so the fourth vial; the fifth trumpet brought "darkness," so the fifth vial also brought "darkness"; the sixth trumpet affected the Euphrates, and so does the sixth vial; and the seventh is the revelation or return of the Lord to reign over the earth—the seventh vial is poured on the air and nothing is said as to any return at all! Is there not a strange break apparently in this correspondence? Or shall we not rather say that the correspondence is so clear in the first six, that it **must** be in the seventh also?

The seventh Trumpet introduces the Day of the Lord, and goes down to the very end of that day,

when the dead are judged before the Great White Throne—what can there be analagous to this in the seventh vial? Let us see.

First: Is the "air" upon which it is poured to be considered literally or as a figure? So "broad" is this book of Revelations that there may be a sense in which the very literal air may to express at this time divine wrath.* But even granting the possibility of this, yet if the earth, sea, sun, moon —all of which are connected with our system—are all clearly used as figures, can anyone give any reason why the "air" should not be also so used? Common consistency would seem to demand this absolutely, and the only question then is "of **what** is the "air" a figure"?

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*The increasing part that the "air" is playing in the present conflict is certainly remarkable. The "command of the air" promises to be as controlling an influence on future wars as the command of the land in remote and the command of the sea in recent times. It is only in its infancy; what will it be when of adult age?

Let anyone picture a clash of armies, composed not, as now, of comparatively few individuals, but of hundreds of thousands, if not of millions on both sides, in the air! No prisoners are likely to be taken: no wounded can hope for a recovery in the future: virtually all the casualties are the "killed"—and to the imagination horribly killed

Might not some student of Scripture, if such there should be in that dread day, read in his Bible of the last of the series of judgments that "filled up the wrath of God" being poured on the "air"; and then, turning to an account of a terrible conflict between two hosts of airships of varied names—might he not reasonably question if there were not some close relation between the prophecy and the event?

It is the atmosphere surrounding our globe, in that firmament formed on the second day, divinely called "Heaven," and is the only day's work of God that is not said to be "good";* nor was there any direct act of God calling anything into being in it at all, merely the "waters above" were divided from the "waters below," and the sea—composing the larger part and filling the lower parts of our globe; salt, bitter, never quenching thirst, never cultivated, never sown with seed, ever restless and subject to every wind that blows, the sea is in every particular a perfect figure of that part of the human race called the Gentiles, or the nations.

These, too, constitute the larger portion of mankind; these, too, have occupied the lowest sphere of privilege, never had divine commandments given them, were never cultivated by law, never sown with seed of the word of revelation, were left to the light of their own conscience, and were subject to strange, unseen influences; now at times, and in certain localities, in the comparative calm of peace, now lashed into fury in the tumult of war, but always chafing against divine cotrol, ever restless, never truly satisfied, their lawlessness is figured perfactly by the sea to which One only can say, "Hith-

*Later Scriptures suggest a possible reason why this second day's work was not called "good," since "the prince of the powers of the air" was not thrust out from it. It was left still to be the habitation of these evil "powers"—a habitation forming as harmonious an environment for **spirits,** as does this earth for the man so closely linked with it by his **body of dust.**

erto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall they proud waves be stayed." (Job XXXVIII.) Nor can we err in this, for we have a divine interpretation: "the (many) waters that thou sawest where the whore sitteth, are people and multitudes and nations, and tongues." (Rev. XVII. 15): Waters figure the nations scattered at Babel, and termed Gentiles.

Thus we confidently gather that "the beast **from the sea"** (Rev. XIII. 1) tells us of some one or something, that is to arise out **of the Gentiles.** He is the future emperor of the fourth, or Roman, empire when revived.

The sea then is a figure of the Gentiles in their natural condition of lawlessness. In eternity there shall be "no more sea" (Rev. XXI. 1), which means that then there shall be perfect rest, the very rest of God, and no more restless, rebellious chafing against the Throne of God for He shall be "all in all." No more shall there be "nations," separated by language and by interests—the race shall again be **one.**

On the third day **the dry land** was called out of and above the sea, thus occupying a more elevated sphere and, in this, perfectly prefigured the call of the Jew out from among the Gentiles, to occupy a far higher sphere of privilege, be cultivated by divine care, and from which fruit was expected. We cannot err then in looking upon the "Land" or "Earth" as a figure of **the Jew.** So the second beast, the one "from the land" (Rev. XIII. 2) we feel quite assured, will be one from among the

Jews, who shall head that people in their apostacy in a day fast coming.

The "land" being then a figure of the Jew, the "sea" of the Gentile, what of **"the Air"?**

Now, the human race is also divided for us in the Scriptures into three divisions: "Give none offence," says the apostle, "neither to Jews, nor to the Gentiles (or Greeks), nor to the Church of God" (1 Cor. X. 32). Can we err—is it **possible** to err in following the Scriptures, and saying that the third element—"the air"—is a figure of the third section of the race—**the Church of God?**

But does God pour wrath on His Church? Certainly not, if we identify the Church with the Body of Christ, indwelt by His Holy Spirit, and united by that Spirit to the Head in Heaven. Never is wrath poured on **that,** for He never "hated His own flesh," and we are "members of His flesh and of His bones." But there is quite another aspect in which it may be, and in this case is, regarded.

As the Gentiles were the first witness, left alone without law, without promise, without anything, and so failed that the wrath of God was poured upon them, and 'the flood came and destroyed them all."

So the Jew was the second witness as a testimony to the **One** God amid all "the gods many and lords many' 'of the nations. With far greater privilege, but bearing with them, too, far higher responsibilities, with greater failure under these re-

sponsibilities, they have been subject to greater wrath.

But who, or what followed as God's witness? The answer is clear: both Jew and Gentile forming the one church of God (Eph. III.), and left to witness to Christ, risen from the dead: a witness that, alas, as every Scripture so clearly declares, fails the more awfully, as its privileges are far greater than those of either Jew or Gentile who preceded.

Now note the perfect correspondence with this that "the air" affords. The "air" is a **spiritual** power, so is the church intended to be. The "air" is above both sea and land; so is the church in its privileges, above both Gentile and Jew. The "air" is confined neither to sea nor land, but envelopes both; so the church, as God's testimony on the earth, is inclusive of both Jew and Gentile (Eph. III. 5), and as in the air, are the spirit-powers of wickedness (Eph. II. 2), so does the apostate church become "the hold of every foul spirit" (Rev. XVIII. 2).

There canot be a reasonable question but that the air is in this book of figures a divinely-given figure of the professing church as the third witness. Nor can there be any reasonable question whatever that this Church is in a position, spiritually, as superior to, or higher than Jew, or Gentile, as the air is locally above sea or land.

Nor should there be any question but that the failure under such privileges—in such a position—must involve a penalty correspondingly severe, and

therefore that on that last failed testimony there should be poured out the **last vial of that series** historically considered in which **"is filled the wrath of God."**

All this confirms with a strength that would appear irresistible the truth that in the "Air" we have that which takes the place of being the present testimony of God upon the earth: **"the professing Church of God."**

But if the last vial of His wrath is poured on that, is it His way to destroy the righteous with the wicked? Has he lost all means of "delivering the godly"? (2 Peter II. 9). Must judgment fall upon penitent and impenitent alike? **Is Enoch to be in the flood?** Is the true bride of Christ to be in this last wrath?

To ask such questions is to answer them; but let us see how our Scripture conforms to that inevitable answer. "There came a loud voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, **'It is done'."** Now, that word "done" means the end of **something**: Surely no one will dispute that—of what is it the end?

There are three similar terse pregnant words in our holy oracles, that throw their beauteous light on one another. First, from the Cross of Calvary comes the cry, "Finished," declaring the end of a dispensation of shadows; but also the beginning of a dispensation of the "good things" thus shadowed. Man is there fully exposed, he is "without strength and ungodly," but God's infinite love too is there

revealed, and the ground for the proclamation of the exceeding riches of His grace is laid—thus the **day of Salvation** began with the finishing of the **Day of legal shadows.**

So time goes on, and "the unsearchable riches of Christ" are "preached among the Gentiles." But is that preaching of grace to these Gentiles to be eternal? Surely not, for two thousand years serve to manifest their complete failure. Those who assumed the place of being Christian were to evidence such unity that "the world might believe" that God had sent Jesus (John XVII.). The bond of love, uniting these otherwise hostile, would be the clearest evidence of the divine mission of the Lord Jesus. No Roman would embrace a Jew—no Jew a Roman; no Greek would love a barbarian; no barbarian a Greek; no slave could be a brother beloved to his master, and find that love reciprocated (Philemon v. 16); apart from a living bond that nullified all their natural antipathies, and so united them that an astonished world would say "**see** how these Christians **love** one another."

But what has been, and is the final testimony of this last Witness? After chastening has followed chastening; after Saracen and Turk have been called to execute that chastening, see to-day the way "**Christian** Nations" witness to the power of Christ's love to bring and keep them in unity! No longer is an ouside scourge needed, their own hands bring their own destruction. This is ever the surest evidence of the end—God is about to renounce this

witness altogether, the Lord Jesus is about to spue it out of His mouth, and when that occurs, comes the loud voice crying for a second time "DONE."

This comes from "the Temple"—suggestive of the renunciation of the more purely spiritual or ecclesiastical side of the testimony.

It comes from "the Throne"—suggestive of the renunciation of the testimony of the nations in the government of the earth—the government of the Gentiles has failed.

Both Church and State have failed utterly. There is no unity—no uniting bond manifested in either sphere. Hundreds of sadly jarring sects in the one —nations in dire conflict in the other. Temple and Throne unite in declaring that the end has come, by the one word "DONE."

But once again, and for the last time, that solemn word "Done" peals out and again we recognize, by and in the word, the end of an age. In Rev. XXI. 6, we stand at the end of the Millenial Day, at the beginning of the eternal. For now the word is (strictly speaking) in the plural, and is: **"they are done": all** God's ways of trial of man are now over for ever.

From the Cross the word "FINISHED" spoke the end of law: from the Temple and Throne the word "DONE" spoke the end of grace: from HIM sitting on the Throne "DONE" shall speak the end of all tests of man, even under government carried out in perfection by the Lord Himself.

It is with the intermediate one that we have to do just now; and we ask by what is this day of grace to the Gentiles brought to an end? A most grave question. Is it by the conversion of the world to God by the Gospel, as the mass of preachers assert? Oh, vain, foolish and delusive dream; for the Lord Himself told us that it is to end as did the day of Noah and Lot (Luke XVII. 26-28) and only if all were in holy perfection **then,** so shall it be when this day ends. No, no; this day shall prove no exception to its predecessors, it shall end, yea it **is** ending in the worst of failures, and the coming of the Lord Jesus in fulfillment of His promise in John XIV., and as delineated in 1 Thes. IV. 13-18, shall bring the day of grace to its end. That is the final and crowning act of "The Grace of Christ": the Coming of the Lord to the air.

Now this at once throws the seventh Vial into correspondence with the seventh Trumpet, which the clear correspondence of the other six demanded, and which yet appeared on the surface to be altogether lacking: for the seventh Trumpet also announced the Coming of the Lord to reign over the earth The Lord's advent to the air is the first stage in that Coming, must be included in the Trumpet, but is seen more clearly in the Vial

Is it not convincing? Does not this correspondence, added to all other proof, give full assurance? But there are still questions that will press themselves on many, and one is "If the rapture is the

final act of **grace,** how can it be included in this final **vial** of wrath?"

It is most surely not wrath to those raptured to be with Him forever Indeed not. But what of those left behind? What shall then hinder the gathering together of tares in bundles to burn them? What shall prevent apostate churches of Christendom forming a unity: and that unity will be "Babylon"?

And it is this one word "Babylon" here that strikes our attention at once. Here we hear of Babylon for the first time in these series of judgments: seals, trumpets, or vials, and this is filled with significance.

It has struck me, in following out this line, that Babylon could not be so mentioned by name so long as the present system of things existed. For Babylon is not merely one single constituent of Christendom among many others—it is not a false system of Christianity, but a false Christianity itself as a whole, and seen, I judge, as a unified pseudo-religious system in Rev. XVII., and as a unified psuedo-Christianized civilization in Rev. XVIII.

Babylon then is not, as many teach, present-day Romanism, which is but one constituent of Christendom, as Protestantism is another, and there are any number of minor constituents. The Church of Rome is certainly to be seen in the Scripture, but to be accurate, it is under the name of Jezebel, Rev. II., the heathen queen in Israel's land in illicit alliance with Israel's apostate king, a perfect figure in

her every evil trait, of the Church of Rome which is not the one professing Church to-day, but is **in** it.

But Babylon is more than this, it is unification of all false Christianity and **cannot possibly come into being in that way as long as the true church is on earth.** There always will be—no matter how great the agitation for a unity headed up in Rome, there always will be an effective protest against it, as long as there are true Christians on earth to utter that protest.

Let these be gone, let the true church be gone, and there will be no obstacle to the desired coalition and the manifestation of the false. "Romanism" will be recognized as the one sole religion of Christendom; the Pope will be given the place from which he is apparently now not very far, of "head" of Christendom, the arbitrator of its controversies; the one possible antidote to war, and in that unification of all apostate Christendom is—"Babylon"!

If this is justified, then whenever we see Babylon in Revelation, we may know that the true Bride of Christ has been caught up to meet her Lord in the air!

But this mention of Babylon by name, we see here in the seventh Vial, and thus again from quite another angle, we are forced to the conclusion that we stand where the seventh Vial may be outpoured at any moment, and the Rapture occurs at this outpouring.

Does not the present outlook, too, go far to confirm this? Is not the Pope as already noted evi-

dently eaten up with the ambition of being the unifier of Christendom both spiritually or ecclesiastically (and as such repudiated by the voice from the Temple), and politically (as repudiated by the voice from the Throne?)

I quote from the "New York Times" of January 5th, 1917—it is but one instance amid thousands: "The new Pope has taken a considerable part in the efforts of neutrals to establish peace among the nations and the Vatican's efforts have bee nsuggested by a longing for Christian unity, and the ending of the conflict that has divided the Christian Church."

There we see the double motive: political and ecclesiastical, governing "His Holiness, the Pope"; nor does hardly a day pass without some endeavor on the Pope's part to keep himself before the nations. To this I shall return.

Again, bearing in mind that in the second and third chapter of this book of Revelation we are going over exactly the same time as in the seals, trumpets and vials: the prophetic fulfillment of the letters, giving us a view of what takes place in the **ecclesiastical** sphere through the centuries to the present day, and the historic fulfillment of the seal, etc., giving as view of what takes place in the **civil** or **political** sphere during the same time, do they not again touch here?

We are evidently at the very end of both lines: what do we find in both?

In the last letter, that to Laodicea, we have the Lord's renunciation, with the utmost loathing of

His professed witness, in the words, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." Note, there are no conditions that might change this verdict, there is no "if," no "if thou dost not repent"; it is the simple announcement of what is now determined; literally: "I am about to spue thee out of my mouth."

In the last vial, we have unified Christendom named "Babylon." Coming into remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of wine of the fierceness of his wrath. (Rev. XVI. 19.)

The rapture must take place prior to the unification of all the jarring sects of apostate Christendom under Rome, as Babylon.

The rapture must take place prior to that utter renunciation in disgust of the impenitent and false.

The rapture then links "the last letter of Chapter II." and the last "vial of Chapter XVI."; being about to take place in the "letter" and having taken place in the Vial.

The rapture would then come at the end of the line of historical foreshadowings; but more, it begins the line of **final** fulfillments. It is not, like the long line of events of human history, merely a shadow; it is **also** final and definitive, and leads us back to the fourth chapter, where we see the effect of that rapture, that has occurred under the seventh vial, in those twenty-four elders, representatives of all the redeemed from the earth enthroned in heaven. Surely it is least worthy of the most serious consideration.

But further mark this again: at the revelation of the Lord at the seventh trumpet He comes in judgment—to judge all the Gentile nations (Matt. XXV.); but this is equally the final deliverance—the salvation of Israel, so that too is both an end and a beginning, the end of Israel's sorrows, the beginning of the judgment of the nations or Gentiles by the Lord personally. For when He thus is manifested the faithful remnant of Israel, the hope of the people, will be **in extremis**. "All nations are gathered against Jerusalem," and not till it is captured does the Lord appear, and His feet once more stand upon the Mount of Olives, see Zech. XIV. With this accord the words of Daniel's prophecy: it is when the power of the holy people is shattered, that all God's judicial ways with them are ended. (Daniel XII. 7.)

So exactly Isaiah speaks (Chapter LXIII. 1-6), and particularly in V. 4: "The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come."

The day of vengeance on the nations **is** the year of the redeemed Israel: the day of the salvation for Israel is one with the judgment on their oppressors, the apostate nations.

Exactly so, and I beg my readers to note it carefully, the deliverance of the true Church **is one with judgment of the false,** the deliverance of the Bride to meet her Lord in the air is one with judgment on the harlot Babylon. In other words, **judgment, or the Vial of Wrath, is involved even in the rapture.**

This fulfillment, I can but think becomes ever more clear and satisfactory as the end approaches, till, for us, our being caught up to "meet the Lord in the air" is by no means a shadow or unreality in itself, but yet a foreshadowing of the judgment of the world at His revelation: and if, as I feel assured it is, unseen by the world at large—mysterious and shadowy enough for that world.

"Done" then again sounds out! God's primal purpose is accomplished, His Son now has His heavenly bride; that is "Done." The fulness of the Gentiles has been brought in; this is "Done." The day of salvation is ended, the acceptable time for the gospel of His grace is past—all the work of grace is effected—it is "Done."

And as the catching away of Enoch, the prophet of impending judgment, was a kind of prophecy of the approach of that judgment, so the catching away of the living church shall be a prophecy of the judgment on Babylon, and of His subsequent revelation: for He cannot be manifested till we go to meet Him to be manifested with him, according to Col. III. 4. "When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

But if we have indeed come to the word "Done" —if indeed we have come to the rapture of the heavenly redeemed, then we need go no further in the interpretation of all the convulsions that attend the pouring out of this last Vial. Our purpose is attained, we have discovered the **possible** link between this cataclysmic war, and the Lord's Coming.

That Coming, in its **first** stage to the air, would, were it to occur, put an end to this war. That Coming, in its **final** stage to the earth, would put an end to all wars. For by no "League of Peace," devised by human policy, shall unbroken peace be established; but only and alone by the earth's true King, being seated on its Throne, the false usurping "prince of the world" cast out and bound in the bottomless pit (Rev. XX). Then, and only then, "He shall judge among nations, and shall rebuke many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not life up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah II. 4.)

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

Then let us sum up what we have written:

First we have in Europe to-day this condition: with the destruction of milions of lives, the complete incapacitation of many millions more, the wiping out of incalculable wealth, neither side has, as yet, been able to strike an absolutely decisive blow.

It is true that Germany is being, as I write, slowly forced back on the western front, that the effects of the blockade of the British fleet are probably being increasingly felt in the interior, that the extraordinary revolution in Russia, which has, at least for the time, politically placed that country in line with its democratic allies, but almost nullified it as a military assistance, has given an impulse to the domestic agitation in Germany—all this can be admitted, but on the other hand, the armies of Germany and Austria still hold large and most valuable areas of Belgium, France, Servia, Montenegro, Poland, and Roumania, while not one hostile foot treads German soil (apart from her colonies) save as a prisoner. Nothing decisive has occurred, and what it may still cost before the Central Pow-

ers are reduced to acept such terms as an outraged and enslaved Belgium, a mercilessly devastated France, a long-exasperated Russia, a Great Britain whose memory is not short shall demand, it is difficult to compute—does it not look as if ruin hovered over the whole scene—a ruin inflicted by each other's hands; that sure evidence of divine judgment?

Yet notwithstanding this—and it is in itself a remarkably striking phenomenon—there is no evidence anywhere of a true national repentance; no thought of a **common sin against the Christ of God,** and of the war being God's Hand on all these nations **because of this dishonor done to His Beloved Son.** Far too deeply have the teachings of the false prophets of the steady betterment and improvement of everything, sunk in, to permit such humbling truths being received. "No, no," they still cry, "the world is going to recommence its march of progress after the war and universal democracy is going to bring a permanent peace and a sweet contentment to the whole earth! But autocracy must be effectually crushed, for all these ills that now afflict the world are not due at all to the apostacy from Christ, but must be laid at the door of **"monarchy."** With this, no form of compromise is possible—nothing but a decisive victory will avail."

Well, the lines are clearly drawn: for amid all, yet apart from all, there is a remnant of true saints: the Church of God, who, distinguished by penitence

and self-judgment, Spirit-taught and enlightened by the Word of God, know that their Lord may come for them **at any time,** and will call them to meet Him in the air, before he completes His journey to take possession of the earth.

Nor is there any known reason why He should not come during this present war, on the contrary, this would appear, from the evident near approach of the Day, which it still **precedes,** anything but improbable.

Assume, then, that what is not improbable, actually does take place, what would result? Instantly armies are mysteriously depleted in all ranks from generals to privates, with the necessary consequence of becoming disorganized and confused; from far and wide comes the news of a similar strange, unaccountable mysterious disappearance of individuals who cannot be found. In some cases, it may be, that even a **throne** is left empty. No rank, no order is left untouched. The nations are as it were stunned.

It is not as if a great battle had been fought, and the battlefield was strewed with myriads of dead—**that** could be regarded as only a natural event; the corpses would be there, and leave nothing mysterious or unaccountable.

But in this case no corpse will be left behind. The present bodies of the redeemed will be "changed" (1 Cor. XV. 50), and made suitable to the heaven to which they are taken—not exchanged and the old one left here. All that those living on

the earth will know will be, as in Enoch's case (for **his** rapture beautifully pictured this) that they "are not, for God has taken" them (Gen. V. 24): they too shall be "sought for, but not found for God has translated" them (Heb. XI. 5).

Surely it is not dificult to enter into the paralysis in the prosecution of the war that would ensue from the astonishment and terror caused by such an event, should it occur. There could be but one conclusion, some appalling supernatural interposition has taken place: what can it mean? Who will interpret the mystery? What does it portend? What shall follow? Such would be the inevitable and universal cries of heart and conscience.

Could the armies possibly go on making strategic plans at such a moment of common terror? It would be impossible.

But those are just the kind of questions that **one** man on the earth is pledged, by his very office, to answer. He, thirsting to assume the place of prominence to which he esteems himself entitled, has been lifting up his voice with exceeding pressure of late, evidently not without hope of being accorded the place of arbiter between the belligerents. He and his counsellors may well have recognized the honor that could be claimed, and would be accorded, to any one who could bring peace to the distracted nations. His attempts hitherto have been quite unavailing, nor does there seem promise of any immediate success. Would not such a stunning blow as this, were it to occur, give exactly the opportun-

ity desired? Would there not be a demand for the recognized representative of "religion" to explain this terror-striking phenomenon?

The Pope then, again lifts up his voice in the temporary silence; a silence like that at Belshazzar's feast, when the fingers of an unseen hand wrote upon the plaister—a silence beneath which would surge the greatest perturbation of heart: "Fear nothing, oh Christian nations," he might cry, "the Catholic Church is still here; she is not gone, for the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church. This is nothing but the divine judgment on her opposers. I too, the Vicar of Christ, am still here; all is well; only 'hear the Church' speaking through her head, and embrace her, oh ye kings. Let me, too, as the representative of the Prince of Peace, invite you to gather at Rome, Christendom's true metropolis, and there, concluding the treaty of Rome, bring at once peace to the exhausted nations, and to the discordant sects. For this let there be but one Empire, its boundaries marked by a recognition of the Papal See of Rome, and thus rightly would it be the Holy Roman Empire, under the headship of your mightiest, so shall political enmity be abolished, and a permanent peace effected. Let there be too but one church in Christendom, under its divinely appointed head, the Pope, supported by that empire, so shall the unity you long have sought be consummated. You will doubtless have noted, O Nations, how the very obstructions to this unity have been actually removed by the providential tak-

ing away, doubtless in judgment, of the troublesome protesters against this excellent consummation. Do you not see how it confirms my infallible (because **ex-cathedra)** explanation of the present phenomenon? Your wisdom will know how to harmonize the opposing political principles amongst you. Unite in letting the Jew dispossess the blood-stained Turk, so shall you both propitiate the deity and make for peace."

We will admit that this is not **impossible.** Is it **improbable?** Do not "the face of the sky and of the earth" greatly increase that probability since it is exactly what Scripture says **shall** be?

While one may easily err in details, this at least is **sure:** the day is approaching and **very** near; the dawn is even now breaking; the Lord's coming as the Sun of Righteousness is near: the coming of the Lord as the Bright and Morning Star must be still nearer. Indeed so near that it may easily occur at any time, and be what shall put an end for a time (for Scripture is unequivocal that peace will not be permanent) to the present war.

Again I say that all for whom I write will readily admit the **possibility** of such an event during the present war; and it is far from my purpose dogmatically, to insist on its **certainty.** It is admittedly but a probability, deduced from Scripture, which may, or may not prove correct. But it is exactly the same kind of deduction for the neglect of which the Lord reproached those of His day so severely.

Before closing I would sum up the evidences that justify our concluding that the seventh vial **may include** (not to speak more dogmatically) the Lord's coming to the air for His people. Nor must one expect any mathematical proof. These truths of God are never proved as one would an arithmetical proposition, in which no moral test is involved, no faith awakened. They will always remain dependent on spiritual discernment on the approval of the conscience enlightened by Scripture, on harmony with more clearly revealed Scriptures, and finally on the acceptance of **faith.**

1st. Negatively: it interposes no event to occur between this moment and His long-waited coming.

2nd. It does not deny, nor contravene one single passage of clear Scripture.

3rd. Positively: recent events, as foretold in the preceding sixth vial, can be traced with peculiar and convincing clearness and simplicity.

4th. This shows that **as far as the shadowy historical fulfillment is concerned,** the sixth vial may be exhausted in this terrific war, and the very next event to be expected; therefore would be the seventh vial.

5th. But the Lord's Coming is always the next event to be expected, therefore the seventh vial is, so far, in perfect correspondence with that coming.

6th. This seventh vial opens with the pregnant single word "Done," which surely indicates the end of the present day of salvation.

7th. But this day ends with the Lord's return in glory the first movement in which is to the air, where His redeemed are caught up to join him.

8th. Thus, and only thus, is the striking correspondence divinely and clearly imprinted on the six preceding trumpets and vials, consistently, fairly, unstrainedly carried out to the seventh. For as the seventh trumpet speaks of judgment on **the nations of the earth,** so the seventh vial speaks of judgment on **Babylon,** the false Church; and as the seventh trumpet proclaims the salvation of Israel, that the year of the Lord's redeemed is come, as speaks Isaiah LXIII. 4, so the seventh vial tells equally clearly of the final salvation of the true Church, Rom. XIII. 2. Are not these correspondences exceedingly confirmatory of the rapture occurring under, or being an integral part of the seventh vial?

Do not let this be misunderstood; however, again let me repeat, as asserting that the Lord is bound to come this year, or next, or at any specific time. That is, as far as I am aware, quite unrevealed. But that does not, on the other hand, affect this clear fact, that in all we have considered, we can more clearly than ever "see the **day approaching,** Heb. X. 25; and so near to all appearance, so **very** near is this, that we may well lift up our heads in renewed hope that it is **we** who shall "not all fall asleep," but be "alive and remain to the Coming of the Lord."

Just consider this, my dear reader, not as a vague possibility, only held **as** a possibility, because you "hold the doctrine of the Lord's Coming," but as a bright **probability**. Oh, the joy of it! If no grave should be opened for us, no tear be shed for us, no hearts left desolate for us; but "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," we should get rid of the natural body of flesh and blood, with the evil nature inherent in it, have a body of glory, as fitted to the scene to which we go as this to the earth. See Him, **aye, see Him,** and never then one pulsation of our being that is not all for Him! Never an evil thought, never a low desire, but we shall be morally, spiritually like Himself forever! Such sweet and holy accord of every part of our being—spirit, soul and body—with the glory of God, that that glory outshines through each part, and He can point, as it were, to each of us and say: There, look at what I can do with one who, by natural birth, was a sinful worm of the dust: now his very body, once dust, expresses what it means to be a son of God, Rom. VIII. 18-23, 1 John III. 1. And in what company shall we take that heavenward journey? You have laid many away, and your memory goes to father, or mother, or husband, or wife, or son, or daughter, or friend, but it is **"together with them"** that we go to meet Him. Is not the very hope enough to make the bereaved smile through their tears, and address themselves with good courage to the few more steps they may have to take to complete their journey?

Nor will I attempt to exhort. No, no! If our God grant us grace really to grasp this hope, as of very possible fruition in our day, it will surely, surely have its own purifying effect, 1 John III. 3. Of what value is a mere **empty profession** of hope? It is just as worthless as a mere **empty profession** of faith. And how prevalent it has been! How we have all sunk ito it! How many of us have become like that Martha whom Jesus loved, and whom He would have comforted with the words, "Thy brother shall rise again"; but she would have none of it. "Oh, yes," she seems dolefully to admit, "I know all that; I have held the 'resurrection of the dead' for many years; yes, he shall rise again; but that will be in some far-off day in the dim future: we call it the last day—ages off probably, certainly not in **my** time."

So we say to one another: "The Lord will come for us at any moment"; and the inner man (not the lip) too often replies: "Oh, yes, Iknow all that; I have held 'The Lord's Coming' for many years; but so have thousands of saints, who, for all that, have fallen asleep; and it may still be many centuries away. I shrink from considering it any more than the vaguest possibility, not at all a hopeful probability that His Coming may put an end to the present war—it shall be at the last day; not in my time."

But that will never do. **That** is not faith; for "faith is the substance" (the making substantial) "things hoped for," and such a dead admission does

not make this "thing hoped for" substantial at all—it is a dead hope.

Oh, then, awaken all thy dear children O God, our Father, to the solemn joy of the hour, to putting away everything that we should not wish Him to find us engaged in; and to leaving any environment in which we would not have Him find us!

But if these lines should be read by one at whose heart, perhaps unconfessed to any, lies the cold sense of uncertainty, or worse: My dear, dear reader, do in spirit, take my hand, and let us consider the matter thus together. Surely we may be of good cheer, for however near the crisis of which we have written may be, **the day of grace** has not passed **yet,** at all events; and even as I write, or you read, these words, our ears must hear the sweet melody of the gospel; "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save"—Christians? Church members? Saints? No, no, not at all; but just to save people like you and me, **"sinners."** Then the only question for us to be quite sure and clear about is: Are we, you and I—sinners, real sinners? Not merely posing as that, because we may think it correct to say: "We are all sinners," or to utter in chorus the words, "God be merciful to us miserable sinners," but because we—you and I—would be utterly ashamed for any one to know of us what we know of ourselves, **and that we know that God knows of us.** Ah, does pride rise up and say, "No, not as bad as that, speak for yourself!" Then farewell, my

friend, our hands unclasp—you must go on in your fancied righteousness, without Christ, to death, and to judgment, and to **hell.** But, do I hear, "Yes, that is just my case; I have tried often to lead a Christian life, failure on failure has marked my life; others seem to be able to do what I cannot." Oh, God be thanked, for you now confess yourself, as I do, to be not only "ungodly," but "without strength," and God says that it was "when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly." Let us then just simply, confidently believe that it **was** for us—for **you and me**—that He, on the Cross, bore the full penalty due to all we have done, and all we are, and God's forgiveness can be quite righteous, His love can flow to us all, unhindered. So we shall come back in penitence to that blessed God, who, in His great love, even spared not His own Son. But do not, as you value your eternal life, delay one instant; for should the seventh vial be poured out and the word "Done" be uttered, then your doom as a rejector of the Gospel would be fixed, and this may be at any moment. It is life we need, eternal life. Come, oh, come and "take of the waters of life freely," for thus only the blessed Lord Jesus gives them.

Finally, my readers all, if this titanic conflict among "Christian" nations be the very last event that we now see **had** to occur prior to the Lord's coming for His people to take them out of such a scene, ending the line of foreshadowed and foreshadowing events in the New Testament book of

prophecy, does it not give intense force and significance to the words the same Holy Spirit has provided for us: "And that, knowing the time (mark the word: **knowing the time**) that now it is high time to awake out of sleep (is it not?) for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand (how intensely true, now!), let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof."

Amen: May it be so with readers and writer to the praise of His grace, and again let us all say, Amen.

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